

WYOMING COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING SENIOR COURIER

Volume 27, Issue 1

Editor: Tess Phillips

January/ February 2026



Mission Statement

Wyoming County Office for the Aging is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of individuals 60 and older by using a holistic approach to empower all seniors by promoting independence, dignity and respect through education, outreach and advocacy, and to provide quality services for those in need.

Get to know your Office for the Aging (OFA) Staff!

Name: Tess Phillips

Birthday: September 30

Hometown: Attica, NY

Job title and years at OFA: In December I was appointed Director of Aging and Youth, and I started as an Aging Services Specialist 12 years ago!

Favorite thing about OFA: Listening to stories! I feel so fortunate to have happened upon a career in this field, and one question that guides me is, 'what is the story this agency will write?' (That question came as inspiration from the Genesee County OFA Director). At this office we are in the position to influence programs and services that improve the quality of life for older adults and their caregivers in our community. My ultimate goal is to continue to be able to serve the community with kindness and integrity, while staying relevant to the changing needs. So, my favorite thing is twofold; working alongside all of the amazing staff with the same goal, and being able to listen to and positively impact the lives of our community members.



Married: yes, to Tony **Kids:** two girls, Izabelle and Sophia **Pets:** two dogs, Capone and Ella

Favorite thing to do away from work: Mainly I like to spend time with family and friends, but I also like to go for walks, go out to eat, and read (I have a never-ending goal to read more and someday I'm actually going to do it)

Favorite candy: Peanut M&Ms and Twizzlers

Favorite movie: I love so many! Stardust, The Heat, Princess Bride, pretty much any romantic comedy :)

Bbq or burgers: burgers

What is something people don't know about you: I lived in Denver, Colorado after college and I wore my mom's wedding dress when I got married.

Are you musical: I love music but have never learned to play an instrument

Who is your hero: My mom, she is all the best things in life wrapped up into one beautiful soul! Hi, Mom!

If you're known for one thing, what would you want it to be: I want to be known for making people feel valued and having fun!





Dear Marci,
I need to stay in skilled nursing facility (SNF) care for several weeks, possibly longer. I'm concerned about the cost. So far, Medicare has covered my stay, but will it continue to? Will Medicare cover an extended SNF stay? I have Original Medicare.

-Maria

Dear Maria,

Medicare Part A covers up to 100 days of care in a skilled nursing facility (SNF) each benefit period. Your costs during a covered SNF stay are:

Days 1–20: You pay \$0 each day after you pay the \$1,676 amount in 2025 (\$1,736 in 2026).

Days 21–100: You pay \$209.50 each day in 2025 (\$217.00 in 2026).

Past 100 days, you will be responsible for the full cost of the stay.

Medicare SNF coverage can be extended in some circumstances:

Once you have been out of a hospital or SNF for 60 days in a row, a new benefit period will start. At that point, you are eligible for another 100 days of SNF care following a three-day qualifying inpatient stay.

If you are receiving medically necessary physical, occupational, or speech therapy, Medicare Part B may continue to cover those skilled therapy services even when you have used up your SNF days in a benefit period.

Note that Medicare will not pay for your room and board, meaning you may face high costs. Check with your provider to see if you qualify for therapy at home through Medicare's home health benefit, or if you could safely receive therapy as an outpatient while living at home.

If you have long-term care insurance, it may cover your SNF stay after your Medicare coverage ends. Check with your plan for more information.

If your income is low, you may be eligible for Medicaid to cover your care. To find out if you meet eligibility requirements in your state, contact your local Medicaid office.

Keep in mind that if your Medicare coverage is ending because you are running out of days, the facility is not required to provide written notice. It is important that you or a caregiver keep track of how many days you have spent in the SNF to avoid unexpected costs after Medicare coverage ends.

Hope this answers your questions!

-Marci

Perry to Warsaw TOPS Grocery Run



Ride to TOPS for FREE with RTS Wyoming!

Effective January 6, 2026 (weekly Tuesdays):

| Location | Bus Arrival | Bus Arrives at TOPS | Bus Departs TOPS | Arrive at Perry |
|---|-------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Knitting Mill Apartments | 10:00am | | | 12:41pm |
| Family Dollar 124 N. Center Perry | 10:06am | | | 12:35pm |
| Birchwood Acres | 10:14am | 10:45am | 12:00pm | 12:27pm |
| Champion Place Apartments | 10:20am | | | 12:20pm |
| Silver Lake Apartments | 10:25am | | | 12:15pm |

RTS Wyoming is proud to operate a grocery run to Tops Friendly Markets weekly on TUESDAYS. This run is subsidized by Tops and The Wyoming County Office for the Aging and is free to you!

Caregiver Corner



Staying Engaged: Why Social & Mental Activity Matters for Brain Health

Keeping the brain active is one of the most meaningful ways to support someone living with cognitive impairment. While cognitive changes can make everyday life feel challenging, research shows that regular social interaction and mental stimulation can help maintain abilities, boost mood, and improve overall quality of life.

Social Connection Keeps the Brain Active: Staying connected with others such as family, friends, neighbors, or community groups helps activate multiple parts of the brain. Conversations, shared activities, and simply spending time with others can reduce loneliness, support emotional well-being, and decrease behavioral symptoms such as irritability or withdrawal.

Mental Exercise Strengthens Thinking Skills: The brain benefits from regular use. Activities such as puzzles, reading, word games, music, crafts, and even simple household tasks help keep cognitive pathways active. These exercises don't need to be complex; consistency is more important than difficulty.

Daily Stimulation Makes a Difference: Mental and social stimulation can be easily woven into daily routines.

Examples include:

- Joining a senior center or community program
- Helping with familiar household tasks
- Taking walks outdoors or enjoying nature
- Playing board or card games
- Listening to music or following a simple recipe

Benefits You May Notice

- Improved mood and reduced anxiety
- Better engagement and alertness
- Slower progression of cognitive symptoms
- A greater sense of purpose and connection

Staying mentally and socially active is essential in supporting brain health after a cognitive diagnosis. Small, enjoyable activities repeated regularly can help preserve abilities, strengthen well-being, and create meaningful moments each day.

Local expertise is located at UBMD's Alzheimer's Disease and Memory Disorders Center. This center provides state of the art diagnosis, treatment, and support for individuals with Alzheimer's and other cognitive disorders. You don't need a diagnosis to reach out, just a concern.



UBMD Neurology – Alzheimer's Disease and Memory Disorders Center
A NYS Department of Health Center of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease
1001 Main St. 4th Fl., Buffalo, NY 14203 | 4851 Main St., Williamsville, NY 14221
Phone: (716) 829-5056 | Fax: (716) 829-3010

OUT OF MY CONTROL



ANOTHER HEALTH DEPARTMENT HEALTH HINT



Does winter have you singing the blues?

MOVE YOUR BODY! Gentle stretches or indoor walks help boost energy and mood.

CATCH SOME SUNLIGHT! Open curtains or sit next to a sunny window whenever you can.

CALL A FRIEND! Chat with a friend, family member, or join a social group to lift your spirits.

DIVE INTO HOBBIES! Pick up a book, listen to music or get crafty to brighten your day.

KEEP A REGULAR ROUTINE! Eat regular meals and maintain a consistent sleep schedule to stay steady and cheerful.

Before you know it, you'll be humming a different tune!



Laughter is Good for the Soul

This is a story about a man. His wife has told him that if he ever comes home drunk she will leave him.

Nonetheless he goes out. He drinks a lot and throws up all over himself. He turns to his friend and asks what he can do. His friend is helpful.

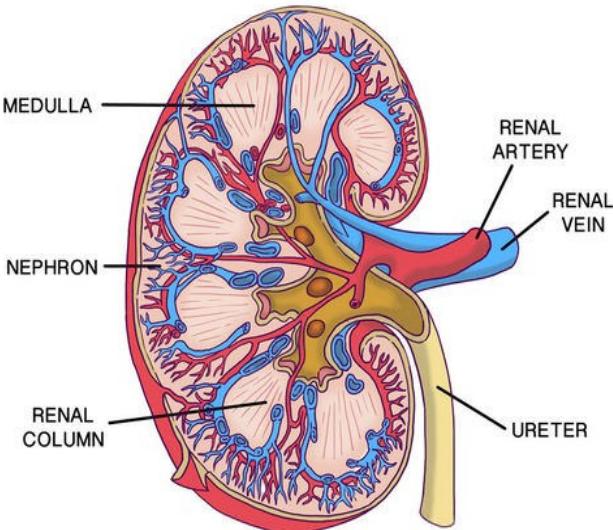
"Go home," he says. "Tell your wife someone threw up on you. And put a twenty dollar bill inside your jacket pocket. Show her the money and tell her the other man gave it to you for the dry cleaning bill."

So this he does. His wife is at first angry. But he explains. He tells her about the drunk man who threw up on him.

He shows her the twenty dollar bill.

She looks. "But why have you got two, twenty dollar bills?" she asks.

"Oh," he says. "The other one is from the man who messed in my pants."



CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD)

What do the kidneys do? The kidneys clean the blood by removing waste products, which then leave the body through the urine. The kidneys have an important role in balancing the body's fluids. They also help control blood pressure, keep bones strong, and make red blood cells.

What is CKD and what causes it? CKD happens when the kidneys are damaged and can't clean the blood properly. There are numerous things that can damage the kidneys but the two most common causes are diabetes and high blood pressure.

What are the symptoms? You may not experience any symptoms at all. However, you may have these symptoms: tiredness, stomachache, muscle weakness, less urine output, swollen legs and/or puffy eyes.

What is the best way to keep kidneys healthy? Keep blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol in target range. Reduce salt intake. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Stay active. Take medications as directed.

Who is more likely to develop CKD? Approximately 1 of 3 adults with diabetes and 1 of 5 adults with high blood pressure may have CKD. In addition to diabetes and high blood pressure, other problems that put you at increased risk include: heart disease, obesity, and a family history of CKD. Kidney infections and a physical injury can also cause kidney disease.

What can you do to prevent kidney failure? Get tested regular for CKD if you are at risk. Find it early. Treat it early.

One measurement is GFR (Glomerular Filtration Rate). This can be checked through a blood test. It will tell your physician how well your kidneys are filtering. A urine test can also be performed.

GFR of *60 or higher* is in the normal range.

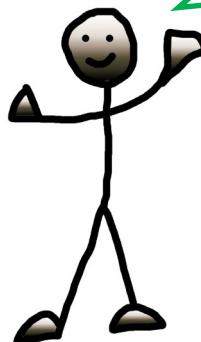
GFR *below 60* may mean kidney disease.

GFR of *15 or lower* may mean kidney failure.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--|------------------|
| Stage of CKD | Stage 1 | Kidney damage (protein in the urine) with normal GFR | GFR 90 or above |
| | Stage 2 | Kidney damage with mild decrease in GFR | GFR 60-89 |
| | Stage 3a | Moderate decrease in GFR | GFR 45-59 |
| | Stage 3b | Moderate decrease in GFR | GFR 30-44 |
| | Stage 4 | Severe reduction in GFR | GFR 15-29 |
| | Stage 5 | Kidney failure | GFR less than 15 |

We are accepting nominations for the 2026 round of Older New Yorkers! If you would like to nominate someone please send us a form with the applicable information as provided below. If your nominee is selected, we will reach out for a picture of them.

1. Name, Address, Phone number and/or email address
2. Name of spouse, number of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren
3. Years of volunteer service
4. Previous or current profession
5. Military branch
6. Names of organizations for which the nominee has volunteered/ does volunteer
7. In 150 words, please submit a profile of the nominee to be included in our program book. Briefly include their biography (i.e., are they a native New Yorker, how long have they lived in New York, past/present career, family details?) as well as details about their civic accomplishments or contributions to your program and community. Brief Biography of the nominee (i.e., are they a native New Yorker, how long have they lived in New York, where they currently reside, past/present career, family details)
8. What advice does the nominee have about volunteering for other New Yorkers?



Volunteers to prepare the Senior Courier for mailing are needed on the **third Monday of the odd months** (January, March, May, July, September &, November). We begin folding and labeling at **9:00 a.m.** at the Office for the Aging, 8 Perry Avenue, Warsaw. **Our next date is March 16, 2026 @ 9am.** Any and all help is greatly appreciated!

W&G Travelers

Annual meeting will be March 2, 2026 at 10 am
at the Warsaw Moose.

W&G Travelers 2026 Overnight trips; *For Booking or more info: Contact Georgette Griffith 585 689 3195 or Jan Romesser 585 492 2322*

Sights and Sounds of Lancaster, PA

\$100 Deposit by February 15

Join us for a spring weekend in Amish country from Thursday to Saturday, April 16-18, 2026.

The trip features a live performance of "Joshua" at the Sight & Sound Theatre, with preferred seating included. Enjoy a spectacular tribute band performing the music of ABBA at The American Music Theatre.

This getaway includes two nights of lodging, two breakfasts, and two dinners—one at an Amish home and another at the popular Miller's Smorgasbord. Participants will have opportunities for shopping and sightseeing at various Amish markets and venues.

- Double Occupancy: \$659
- Triple Occupancy: \$639
- Single Occupancy: \$878

Best of Michigan

\$100 Deposit by May 1

Experience the charm of Frankenmuth, Michigan's "Little Bavaria," and Mackinac Island the "Jewel of The Great Lakes" from Tuesday to Friday, September 8-11, 2026. This trip offers something for everyone, including horse-drawn carriage rides, a hydro-jet ferry ride, and visits to Christmas Wonderland and Kewadin Casino.

The package includes three nights of lodging, three breakfasts, and three dinners. Guests will enjoy unique shops and picturesque scenery throughout their stay.

- Double Occupancy: \$779
- Triple Occupancy: \$759
- Single Occupancy: \$1,078

DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

ACCEPTANCE
APPRECIATION
ATTENTION
AWARENESS
BREATHING
CALM
CLARITY
COMPASSION
DETERMINATION
FLEXIBILITY
FOCUS
GRATITUDE

Meditation & Mindfulness

Word Search



INSPIRATION

PATIENCE

JOYFUL

PRACTICE

KIND

PRESENT

LISTEN

QUIET

LOVE

REFLECTION

MEDITATION

RELAXATION

MINDFUL

SERENITY

NONJUDGMENTAL

THOUGHTS

OBSERVATION

VISUALIZATION



Driver Safety

2026 Smart Driver Courses

Tuesday, March 3

Tuesday, May 19

Tuesday, August 4

Tuesday, October 6

9:00 am – 3:30 pm

½ hour lunch break – bring a lunch

Bring check made payable to: AARP

\$25 for members \$30 for non-members

Bring driver's license and AARP card.

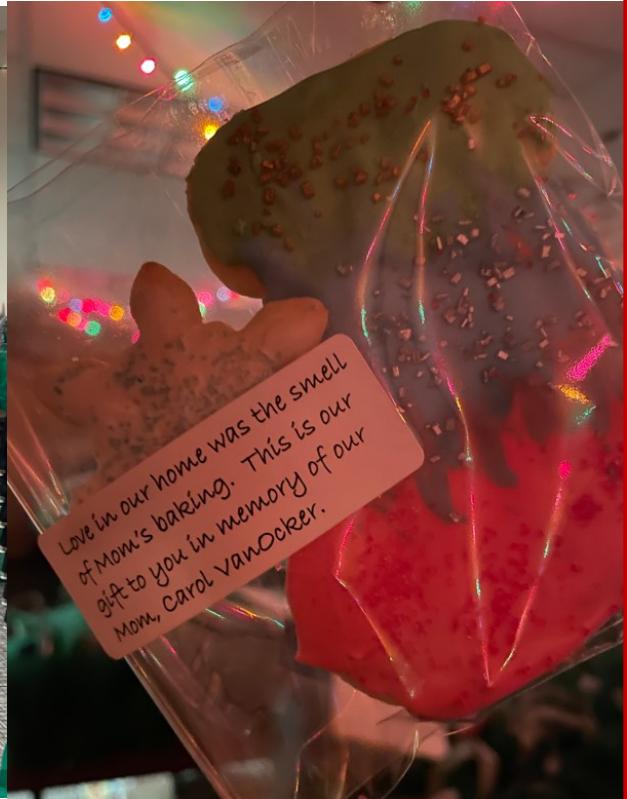
Class held at the Wyoming County Office for the
Aging, 8 Perry Avenue, Warsaw

**Call the Wyoming County Office for the Aging at
(585)786-8833 to reserve your seat.**



Each year during the holiday season, the Office for the Aging puts together gift bags for every one of our clients. This year we made 340! Please accept this as a small token of our gratitude, we would not be able to do it without each and every one of you that took the time to contribute.

Thank you so much for the difference you made in the lives of our clients!



If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information provided in the Senior Courier or if we can be of assistance to you in any way, please contact the Wyoming County Office for the Aging at (585) 786-8833 or if long distance 1-800-836-0067.

Tess Phillips- Director
Kelli Goulet- Senior Case Manager
Dannyel Robb- Case Manager
Julie Spink- Case Manager
Marianne Sicher- Account Clerk
Susan Schell- Registered Dietitian
Brittney Speicher- Transportation Coordinator

Paula Beckstrand- Fiscal Officer
Darla Dabolt- Health Insurance Coordinator
Taylor Lamb-Conlon- Aging Services Aide
Alison Powers- Personal Care Aide
Cathy Martin- Personal Care Aide
Christina Ferrin- Aging Services Specialist



GRIEF RESOURCES



Q: Is GriefShare for me?

When a loved one dies, it can feel like you're alone. Few people understand how painful and isolating your grief can be. But that doesn't mean you have to suffer by yourself.

At GriefShare, you'll find a safe, comforting place where you can talk with others about your grief. You'll find support, direction, and guidance on how to make it through.

If you could use help with any of the topics below, GriefShare is for you.

Q: How do I join a group?

Church and meeting information

When: Thursdays, 6:00-7:30 pm
February 19-May 14, 2026

Where: Valley Chapel FMC
3415 State Route 19S
Warsaw, NY 14569

Contact: Lauren MacConnell
laurenmacconnell@yahoo.com
(585) 322-5771

Register: Scan QR Code or visit
valleychapel.org/groups



Need another day or time?

Visit griefshare.org/findagroup to find a list of groups in your area. Or find a group meeting online.

Q: How will GriefShare help me?

At this 13-week grief recovery support group, you'll:

- Hear insights from grief recovery experts
- Meet others who understand what you're going through
- Receive comfort and support
- Learn practical tips for navigating your grief
- Discover the 6 signs of healing

Q: What topics are covered?

- Your Grief Journey
- Sadness & Loneliness
- Fear & Anxiety
- Anger
- Regrets
- Grief & Your Relationships
- Questions for God
- Hope & Resilience

Q: What should I expect at a group?

Each week you can expect to view a 30-minute video filled with helpful guidance, discuss grief-related issues, and gain personal recovery tips through your workbook.

3 key parts:



Video seminar



Group discussion



Personal workbook

Online Caregiver Support Group

Caring for a loved one can be deeply meaningful and incredibly challenging. HomeCare & Hospice offers a free online caregiver support group, providing a welcoming space for caregivers to connect, share experiences, and learn practical coping strategies through guided discussion and peer support.

Open to all caregivers, whether you are supporting an aging parent, spouse, or loved one with serious illness. Participation is virtual via Microsoft Teams, allowing caregivers to join from home.

Upcoming sessions:

- **Tuesday, Feb 4 & Mar 4, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. (via Teams)**

Info or questions: Contact Mikaila at 585-343-7596

Arcade Bereavement Support Groups

Coping with loss is never easy. HomeCare & Hospice offers free monthly bereavement support groups in person in Arcade, guided by a licensed Family Support Specialist. Sessions provide a safe space to share, listen, and heal — open to anyone, whether or not hospice was involved.

Upcoming meetings at 563 W Main Street, Arcade:

Wednesday, Feb 18 & Mar 18, 3–5 p.m.

Info or registration: 585-653-5290 | abblack@homecare-hospice.org

after the long goodbye: a bereavement group



Grieving the loss of someone who had Alzheimer's disease or dementia can be uniquely challenging. Join fellow caregivers for a guided discussion of life after loss.

Join us via Zoom Monday evenings for 5 every-other week sessions beginning February 23.

Brought to you by



Western New York Chapter



Affiliate of Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo

Pre-registration is required.

Visit bit.ly/AlzGrief or call the Wilson Support Center at 716.836.6460

This program is supported in part by a grant from the New York State Department of Health

Suicide bereavement support group

Together, we find hope.

You're not alone in this journey.
We're here to support you.

If you've lost a loved one to suicide, you're not alone. Our **virtual** support group offers a safe and compassionate space to share, heal, and find hope alongside others who understand.

Date & time

Every Tuesday
5:30 pm– 7:00 pm

January 6 - March 10 2026
April 7 - June 9 2026
October 6 - December 15 2026

How to join

Contact us at (716) 753-4522 or RaynorC@chqgov.com

This is a closed group, you must register to attend.
Group is on break July through September.



**WYOMING COUNTY
OFFICE FOR THE AGING**

8 Perry Avenue
Warsaw, New York 14569

Phone: 585-786-8833
Fax: 585-786-8832
Email: officeaging@wyomingcountyny.gov



God Bless America

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Address Service Requested

Wyoming County Office for the Aging Senior Courier Mailing Request

We continuously try to reach new seniors age 60 years or over living in Wyoming County. Please help us add to our mailing list by sending names and addresses to this office. Also, if your address has changed or if we do not have your correct apartment numbers, please let us know. You can help us avoid unnecessary postal costs by using this form for all changes. Please fill out the form and mail it to the address below. Please PRINT.

Wyoming County Office for the Aging

**8 Perry Avenue
Warsaw, New York 14569**

Name: _____

Last Name

Husband

Wife

Address: _____

Street or Box

City

State

Zip

Old Address: _____

Street or Box

City

State

Zip

New Moved Deceased

The publication of the Senior Courier is funded by: The New York State Office for the Aging, Wyoming County Office for the Aging, and your generous contributions.