

# THE NEXT CHAPTER NEWS

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2025

ANNUAL STAY FIT CONGREGATE DINING PICNIC

**COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
MARK POLONCARZ  
COMMISSIONER  
RANDALL HOAK**



Look! Our new logo!

## WHAT A GREAT SUMMER!

We cherished every moment with you this summer! From University Express and SNAP-Ed to Aging Mastery, Club 99, HEAP outreach, our garden boxes, RSVP volunteering, caregiver support, and so much more — thank you for making this season so meaningful! Our staff was so honored to be able to celebrate our rebranding with you. While we wrap up a few programs in August, we are so excited for what's to come this Fall!

As the summer winds down, August and September bring special opportunities to focus on your health, happiness, and connection. These months highlight important themes like National Immunization Awareness Month, Healthy Aging Month, and World Alzheimer's Month. It's a great time to get your vaccines, schedule checkups, and care for your mind and body. The Erie County Department of Health offers easy-to-access immunization clinics! Take advantage of our Department's programs like University Express, Club 99 fitness and dance classes, SNAP-Education nutrition workshops, Cooking with SASS Demos, and more to help you stay active and healthy. We also want to celebrate you on National Senior Citizens Day (August 21) and Grandparents Day (September 7) —thank you for all you do! In September, we are focused on important topics like managing pain, heart health, mental wellness, and being prepared for emergencies. Programs like Aging Mastery, A Matter of Balance, and RSVP are here to help you stay connected and supported. This season is all about celebrating you and helping you live your best life every day.

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) provides the Blooming Health platform so agencies like Erie County Department for the Aging can quickly connect with older adults. We can now reach over 16,000 people instantly by phone, text, or email—in the language you prefer. You may have already received a welcome message if you shared your contact information with us before. If you didn't opt out, you're still signed up but can unsubscribe anytime. We use this to send important alerts about emergencies, weather, announcements, surveys, and events. All messages come directly from us and are safe—this is not a scam. To sign up, email [senior.info@erie.gov](mailto:senior.info@erie.gov) or call 716-858-8526 (NY Connects).





# SENIOR HIKING CLUB



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WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20TH

9:30AM

18 MILE CREEK CONSERVATION PARK -  
MEET IN PARKING LOT  
MODERATE IMPACT/LOW ACCESSIBILITY  
REGISTER - [ERIE.GOV/PARKS/EVENTS](http://erie.gov/parks/events)



# SENIOR HIKING CLUB

Wednesday September 10th

9:30am

Franklin Gulf Conservation Park

Meeting location - Larkin Rd parking lot

No restrooms

High impact | strenuous hike | not accessible

Register at [erie.gov/parks/events](http://erie.gov/parks/events)



# SEPTEMBER IS

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH

### STAY IN THE KNOW

Emergencies—like severe weather, power outages, or health crises—can happen at any time. Older adults may face extra challenges during these events, so it's important to be ready.

#### Erie County Resources:

- Ready Erie App: Get real-time alerts, weather updates, and emergency info.
- Special Needs Registry: Let emergency responders know if you need extra help.
- Erie County Department for the Aging: Call (716) 858-8526 for help with planning and resources.

#### Safety Tips:

- Have a Plan: Know who to call and where to go in an emergency.
- Keep an Emergency Kit: Include medications, water, flashlight, and important papers.
- Stay Informed: Sign up for alerts and check in with family or neighbors.
- Pet Preparedness: Plan ahead for pets if evacuation is needed.

#### Want to Help?

Join the Erie County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)—a volunteer group supporting public health and emergency response. Older adults with medical, administrative, or life experience are encouraged to get involved. No medical background required! Learn more or sign up at [www.erie.gov/MRC](http://www.erie.gov/MRC) or call (716) 858-7101.

### WHAT DOES ERIE COUNTY DO?

#### Who's Involved?

When emergencies strike Erie County takes a team approach. Departments and community partners work together to keep everyone safe, with a focus on helping older adults and other vulnerable groups.

#### 1. Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (DHSES)

Leads emergency response coordination. Operates the Emergency Operations Center and keeps first responders, local governments, and the public informed. They also lead Erie County COAD which is a group of hundreds of community organizations who work together to pool resources, information, and support.

#### 2. Department of Health (ECDOH)

Handles health-related emergencies—like disease outbreaks, vaccination clinics, and medical alerts. Also supports those with special health needs during a crisis.

#### 3. Department for the Aging

Makes sure older adults get the help they need—such as transportation, food, wellness checks, and connections to caregivers or services.

#### 4. Department of Public Works

Clears roads, restores infrastructure, and helps make sure emergency vehicles can reach people during storms or other disasters.

#### 5. Sheriff's Office & Local Police

Maintain safety, provide evacuations, and assist during high-risk events.



# University Express

Thank you for a wonderful Spring 2025 Semester! We look forward to seeing you all in the fall! Catalogs come out late-september

Just in case you miss us, we're hosting trivia in the park! Register on our website or call 716-858-6897.

Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup> at Noon at Pavillion #7 at Ellicott Creek Park

## Fall Prevention Seminar

- ◆ Tips and tricks to keep you on your feet
- Free for everyone



August 7<sup>th</sup> 2025

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Back to Basics Outreach Ministries

1001 East Delavan Avenue  
Buffalo NY 14215

(Enter the gate to the right of the complex. Park on the right to the rear of the complex)



Learn home safety to prevent falling



Learn exercise to prevent falling



Personalized Guidance



Interactive Workshops

Talk with the front desk to sign up

## ERIE COUNTY RSVP



We had a blast at our annual summer picnic!  
We look forward to seeing you all in action soon at your volunteer stations. Thank you for all you do!

716-858-7548



ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup>



VS



FIRST PITCH 1:05PM | GATES OPEN AT 12

FREE TICKET AND FOOD VOUCHER



# DAY AT THE PARK!

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SENIOR CENTER  
TO GET TICKETS BY AUGUST 7TH

TICKETS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED BY YOUR  
CENTER THE WEEK OF AUGUST 11TH



# THE DISH

Messages from our Nutrition Team

## Walk with Ease:

Lackawanna Senior Center – MWF: Aug 4 – Sept 12 from 12:30-1:30pm

Lancaster Senior Center– MWF: Sept 8 – Oct 17 from 2:30-3:30pm

## SNAP Education:

West Seneca Senior Center – Wednesdays: Sept 3, 10, 17, 24 from 9:00-10:00am

## Cooking with SASS:

Alden Senior Center – Tuesdays: Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30 from 10:30-11:30am

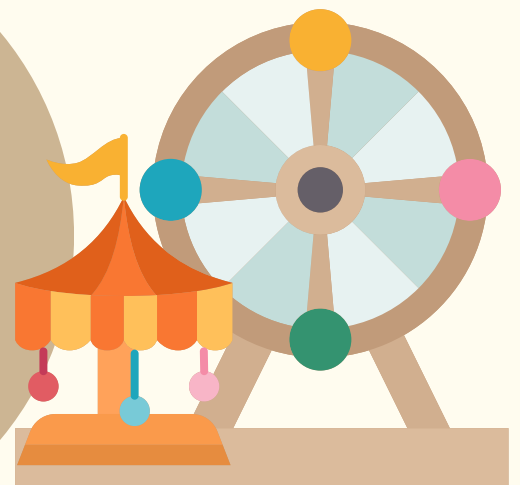
St. John's Community Church, Eden – Tuesdays: Oct. 7, 14, 21, 28 from 1:00-2:00pm

**Container Gardens** are starting in Akron and Alden in August! Contact them for more information :)



Visit us, the Erie County  
Department for the Aging at  
the Erie County Fair

**Thursday August 7**  
**Sunday August 10**  
**Tuesday August 12**  
**Friday August 15**  
**Sunday August 17**  
**10am-10pm**



# Healthy Lifestyle, Healthy Brain!

While some brain changes are inevitable as we age, there is a growing body of research to suggest that adopting healthy behaviors, including healthy eating, exercising regularly, not smoking and staying cognitively engaged, may help reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

The WNY Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association offers these 10 healthy habits for your brain to adopt, no matter what your age:

**Challenge your mind.** Be curious. Put your brain to work and do something that is new for you. Learn a new skill. Try something artistic. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.

**Get moving.** Engage in regular exercise. This includes activities that raise your heart rate and increase blood flow to the brain and body. Find ways to build more movement into your day — walking, dancing, gardening — whatever works for you!

**Eat right.** Eating healthier foods can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline. This includes more vegetables and leaner meats/proteins, along with foods that are less processed and lower in fat. Choose healthier meals and snacks that you enjoy and are available to you. Make eating right a habit!

**Maintain a healthy weight.** Talk to your health care provider about the weight that is healthy for you. Other healthy habits on this list — eating right, physical activity and sleep — can help with maintaining a healthy weight.

**Be smoke-free.** Quitting smoking can lower the risk of cognitive decline back to levels similar to those who have not smoked. It's never too late to stop.

**Control your blood pressure.** Medications can help lower high blood pressure. And healthy habits like eating right and physical activity can help too. Work with a health care provider to control your blood pressure.

**Manage diabetes.** Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or controlled by healthier eating, increasing physical activity, and medication, if necessary.

**Sleep well.** Good quality sleep is important for brain health. Stay off screens before bed and make your sleep space as comfortable as possible. Do all you can to minimize disruptions. If you have any sleep-related problems, such as sleep apnea, talk to a health care provider.

**Protect your head.** Help prevent an injury to your head. Wear a helmet for activities like biking, and wear a seatbelt. Do what you can to prevent falls, especially for older adults.

**Stay in school.** Education reduces your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Continue your own education by taking a class at a local library, college, or online.

The Alzheimer's Association is available with information and support for families as they navigate the disease and related research. For more information, visit [alz.org/wny](http://alz.org/wny) or call the 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900.



# BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY - CASE MANAGEMENT STYLE!

## Case Management Humor:

How do Case Managers handle a heavy caseload?

- They “carry the weight” of their clients with empathy and compassion every day!

☛ Consider having a Case Manager visit you to discuss services that may be right for you.

Why did the Case Manager bring a map to the visit?

- Because they’re always guiding people toward knowledge and resources!

☛ Check out our Benefit Checklist to see what you may qualify for.

How does a Case Manager stay calm during stressful times?

- They practice deep breathing and remind themselves of the lives they’ve positively impacted.

Case Management: Saving the world one progress note at a time.



## Did you know?

In 2024, our Case Managers helped more than 3,734 older adults in Erie County stay independent by connecting them with in-home services. We are a consistent source of support—responsive, resourceful, and rooted in compassion.

Want to talk to a case manager?  
Call our NY Connects line 716-858-8526.

## KERRY, ON! HONORING KERRY PEEK

After nearly three decades of dedicated service, Kerry Peek is retiring from the Cheektowaga Senior Center. Since joining the center in 1996, Kerry’s impact has been nothing short of extraordinary. Starting in the craft room, she rose to become director by 2006—a role she has led with compassion, vision, and unwavering advocacy for older adults.

Under Kerry’s leadership, the center has seen numerous innovative programs come to life, including the Tuesday and Thursday Van service for non-driving members, the always-popular Funny Fridays, and a partnership with UB’s “Team Alice” to promote medication safety. She also played a key role in bringing the Stay Fit Dining Program to Cheektowaga.

Kerry’s warmth, dedication, and forward-thinking spirit will be deeply missed. We are incredibly grateful for her remarkable contributions and her tireless commitment to the well-being of older adults. Congratulations, Kerry—you’ve made a lasting difference!





**MAIN LINE (NY CONNECTS) - 716-858-8526**

**95 FRANKLIN ST - FLOOR 13**

**BUFFALO NY 14202**

**WEBSITE- [ERIE.GOV/AGING](http://erie.gov/aging)**

**FACEBOOK- ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING**