

*Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place*

## Defying Gravity: Don't Be an Apple!

Can we all agree that gravity exists? You may notice it most when you glance in the mirror and discover your cheeks settling somewhere near your jawline. But even if Sir Isaac Newton truly did discover this natural force by watching an apple fall from a tree, all the while thinking about the forces of nature, there's no need to imitate that tasty fruit. Falls among seniors are (ironically) on the rise, making them—not cars—the most common cause of injury death nationwide for seniors, with 36,000 in 2020. More than one in four older adults take a fall annually (but less than half confess to their doctor.)

"Falls are the #1 trauma-related injury in Delta County," explains Kayleigh Wright, the Trauma Nurse Coordinator for Delta Health, "especially in fall and winter. Ladders, stepstools, roofs..." (Think cleaning out gutters, hanging Christmas lights...)

Kayleigh Wright presented her program "Fall-Proof Your Life" at the Monday morning Coffee Klatch at Paonia on November 13, offering free mugs in exchange for throw rugs, which can be a major slipping hazard. She provided lots of helpful hints, like using motion-activated night lights to keep your home safer, and recommended installing grab bars in the bathroom.

"Some medications can make people drowsy," Wright warns. "Diabetics may have a hard time feeling their feet.... And it's important to keep up-to-date with hearing and vision checks."

We all need to stay as active as we can for as long as we can. SAIL (Stay Active & Independent for Life) classes—held in each North Fork community through the Ambulance Auxiliary—and Tai Chi are great forms of exercise for older adults. Resa and Tom Wells are instructors for the American Tai Chi Academy, with beginner classes at the Paonia Senior Center, Thursday at 2:00.

Every second of every day, an older American suffers a fall. Even if you exercise, caution is always wise. One of our seniors who bikes, hikes, and does Pilates tripped over a garden hose and broke her sacrum. Another active senior fell down stairs after coming into a dimly-lit room from outside and broke her pelvis.

Snow and ice make staying upright more difficult. Our "Snow Buddies" program can keep walkways around your home safer, with volunteers helping out by shoveling after a storm. But for traveling farther afield, consider strapping on Yaktrax or adding an ice grip to your cane. In other words, be mindful. "Make sure you can see the area in front of you," Kayleigh Wright suggests. "And it's smart to let friends or family know you're going out, especially in winter, so they can make sure you get back in a timely manner."

Though we need lots of the white stuff to keep us green in summer, it makes getting around more hazardous. North Fork Senior Connections is seeking a few good volunteers as "Snow Buddies" to keep the older adults in our community safer this winter. If you're willing to assist a senior by shoveling their walk as needed after storms, or if you're a senior who needs help with snow removal please call 970.527.3482

## It Really Is A Wonderful Life!

Please join us for a special Holiday Celebration on Thursday, December 7, starting at **9:30 AM**. The wonderful folks at the Paradise Theater and an anonymous donor present the chance to see what the town of Bedford Falls would be like if George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) had never been born. Enjoy homemade cookies and hot spiced cider before the classic film, then make a reservation for the catered lunch at the Paonia Senior Center by calling 527.3435.

## A Hug in a Bowl!

North Fork Senior Connections is excited about our new initiative to supply older adults with nutritious food. Under the mentorship of local hero Chrys Bailey, her students are working with us to provide soup through the winter to seniors in need. North Fork Valley farmers are working with the cooks to furnish the best-quality organic ingredients. Twice a month from December through March the participating seniors will receive a quart of soup, delivered by our dedicated volunteers.



“These offerings will be nutrient-dense and hearty—perfect for the depth of winter!” explains our new Board secretary Faye Sullivan, who spearheaded the collaboration. “We are proud to be supporting our seniors in this way because they deserve the best quality food available.”

## Creative Coalition Art Classes

Announcing a NEW Collaboration with the North Fork Creative Coalition! FREE classes in the arts will be offered in the New Year—please give us your input ASAP. Call 527.3482 or email [nfseniorconnections.org](mailto:nfseniorconnections.org) Which TOP FOUR (4) classes would you like to see offered in 2024?

- A. Yoga
- B. Nia Dance (guided dance with a free flowing movement)
- C. Ensemble singing
- D. Claywork
- E. Mosaic & Collage
- F. Felting & soft sculpture
- G. Storytelling (written and recorded with Paonia Books/KVNF)
- H. Watercolor painting
- I. Theater & Improvisation
- J. Other \_\_\_\_\_

What time would you like classes offered?

- A. 2x per week between 9-12p
- B. 2x per week between 12 - 3p
- C. 3x per week between 9-12p
- D. 3 x per week between 12 - 3p

## Paonia Path of Least Resistance Gardening Series

How can you talk about gardening if you don't have a garden? This year John Valentine is providing a 4x8' green metal raised beds installed at the homes of six participants, complete with organic compost, soil, seeds, fertilizer, drip, and row cover/hoops.

Two sets of classes will run alternating weeks. Series 1 will feature presentations with Q&A, repeating last year's offerings. Series 2 classes follow one week later, offering the same topics but focusing on problem solving for anyone with an active ongoing garden.

Starting December 4 at 1:00 at the Senior Center, the initial Series 1 class will highlight the varieties most successful in the North Fork, including those best for our short season with cold and heat tolerance. The following week on December 11 the Series 2 class will pool buying power by placing group orders to Territorial, Johnny's, and High Desert Seeds. You can cut your seed bill up to 90% by ordering portions of packets and paying only that portion.

The ongoing gardening group has chosen these topics: **Seed Varieties for Paonia; Paonia Soils** (types, problems, amendments, testing, fertilizer); **Containers** (includes raised beds); **Watering** (methods, approaches); **Drip Irrigation; Garden Myths** and Verifying Information; **Drip System Buying Group** (buying in bulk like the seeds group); **Pests, Diseases, and Treatment/Prevention** (grasshoppers!), **Integrated Pest Management; Growing Tomatoes; Trees; Preparing for Winter;** and **Harvest & Storage**. Other topics are welcome.

The first two classes, Seed Varieties and then the buying pool, are on December 4th and 11th at 1pm at the Paonia Senior Center. Dates for 2024 classes will be listed in the January NFSC newsletter. Happy Gardening!

## Need a Ride?

Call our special Neighborly Rides number 527.1735—to schedule a free trip within Delta County!



## December Birthdays

### Happy Birthday to:

Steve Lyons 12/1  
Joyce Roberts 12/10  
Bronwen Barry 12/19  
Terry Randall 12/31

Bella Deutsch 12/9  
Dianne Gonzales 12/12  
Viva Kellogg 12/28

### Stop and Shop!

During the Open House at the Paonia Senior Center on Saturday, December 2, from 10-3, enjoy refreshments and purchase bargain fabric, craft materials, baked goods and gifts—including beautiful wreaths crafted by Lindi Mereness and items made by the Silver Threads Sewing Circle. Shop locally!

## December Calendar

### What's Happening at the Senior Center in October

**Stop and Shop** 12/2, Craft Origami Light Boxes 12/4, Senior Movie 12/7, Holliday Potluck 12/14: *see articles*

**Gardening Class** 12/4, 1:00 @ Paonia Senior Center- Vegetable Plant Varieties for Paonia (*see article p. 2*)

**Gardening Class** 12/11, 1:00 - Seed buying group- buy only how much you need (*see article*)

**Here & Now MEDITATION**-Meg O'Shaughnessy facilitates this ongoing group at Paonia Senior Center Thursday mornings at a new time: 9:00-10:00. All are welcome.

**Book Clubs:** Hotchkiss group will discuss *Wintering: The Power of Rest & Retreat in Difficult Times* by Katherine May on Wednesday, December 20 @10AM; Paonia group *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens plus film Tuesday, December 19 @2pm.

**Silver Threads Sewing Club**, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays @ Paonia Senior Center at 1:00. All levels/works-in-progress—we're working on a great project! Facilitated by experienced quilter Connie Hodges & friends. Questions? 970.527.3482 or Connie @ 970.216.4457

**Paonia River Park Walks** every Wednesday 10am. Meet at the gazebo.

**Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)** Exercise and fall prevention classes presented

by the North Fork EMS: Paonia Senior Center Tues & Fri 8:45-9:45 or 10-11; Hotchkiss Memorial Hall - Mon & Thurs @9:30; Crawford Town Hall 10-11 Wednesdays plus Advanced classes Tues & Thurs 5:30-6:30 pm

**Write Your Life**- Memoir for Seniors at Paonia Senior Center on Wednesdays at 1:30. For more info/to join please call the facilitator, Yuri Chicovsky, at 970-314-0303.

**Senior Meals**- Senior Centers open for VOA Lunch (also Available for Pick-up) M,W & F: Call Debbie at (970) 874 - 7661 for more info or to sign up.

**Hotchkiss Senior Center** serves hot full meals cooked on the premises Tues and Thurs and a soup lunch on Wed, all at noon. 872.3494

**Caregivers' Support Group** Thursdays, 1 - 3 pm via Zoom. Contact Gayla Michaud for information at 970.825.6288 or email [GAMich76@outlook.com](mailto:GAMich76@outlook.com)

**Craft an Origami Light String** A special Coffee Klatch: FREE class with Lynn Mattingly @ Paonia Senior Center—Please pre-register so we can have sufficient materials. Monday, December 4 @ 9:30AM

**Coffee Klatch**@Paonia Senior Center-Send ideas for who you would like to see at the Klatch to [nfseniorconnections@gmail.com](mailto:nfseniorconnections@gmail.com) or call 970 527-3435.

**Thursday Lunch**- Catered lunches @ Paonia Senior Center. Dec 7, Chick-A-Pea; 12/14 Potluck (*see article p. 4*) For reservation, call 970 527-3435.

# North Fork Senior Connections

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

P.O. Box 1738 Paonia, CO 81428



## Board of Directors

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# December 2023

NFSC is proud to announce that we have been accepted as part of Colorado Gives Day—December 5, 2023. This is a



state-wide campaign to generate support for local non-profits of all kinds. We have a page on the Colorado Gives 365 website where our supporters can contribute to the ongoing sustainability of Senior Connections. You can also set up your own fundraising campaign for North Fork Senior Connections, that will go out to Facebook or other social media to encourage your friends and family to make a contribution to an organization that is important to you. (Our Board vice-chair Bonnie Eisenberg used her recent birthday to raise funds this way.)

We are a small organization, so your donation of any size will have an impact on the programs and services we are able to provide in 2024 for the older adults of the North Fork Valley. We hope you will join us on Dec 5th and help us improve senior lives in our community. Go to ColoradoGivesDay.org. Early Giving is open now!

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## Good Cheer on December 14

Join your fellow seniors for a very special potluck on Thursday, December 14, at noon. A joint effort by The Paonia Senior Center and North Fork Senior



Connections promises not only a fine feast but also members of the local madrigal group, who will perform a few of their Holiday hits and lead us all in singing classics. Please bring a hearty dish to share. You won't want to miss special guest Boyd Boland, a proud Eagle graduate, who will read his original piece, "The Names of Paonia."

Thanks to our generous sponsors:



Thanks to our generous coffee sponsor:

Both Senior Connections and the Paonia Senior Center appreciate their support!

You make Senior Connections work—your time, your effort, your generous contributions.

**DONATE TODAY!**

NFSC website [www.nfseniorconnections.org](http://www.nfseniorconnections.org)

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