

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

CommUnity in Action

by Laura Lee Yates for North Fork Senior Connections

A On November 7th, a regular at the Paonia Senior Center mentioned how glad she was to live in “a purple community, where people help each other



no matter how they vote...” That started me thinking (more than usual) about what it means to be part of a community. Use of the word is as old as the 1400s, when it referred to “The body of people having common or equal rights or rank, as distinguished from the privileged classes.” We have no king or aristocracy; in Paonia even the mayor pays that pesky sidewalk fee.

But I want to focus on the “unity” part of the world. Some folks were born and bred here in the North Fork. Others of us emigrated from near and far, including places much more urban. But we share a landscape

that we love: it’s that simple. To me that makes us a community in spite of our differences. We’re neighbors. We care about each other.

The recent Service Saturdays—October 26th in Hotchkiss and Crawford, November 2nd in Paonia—drove that realization home. Volunteers ranged in age from mid-eighties to eighteen months. (Okay, Elora didn’t accomplish much in the way of work, but she brought a smile to every face.) Tasks ranged from cleaning gutters to harvesting herbs, washing windows to winterizing swamp coolers—and raking leaves: LOTS of leaves. The teams of volunteers visited 33 elder households across the North Fork. No money changed hands—instead the currency was generosity and gratitude, sweetened with home-baked cookies from both sides of the equation.

“I got all the kids (and their parents),” reported Rita Murphy. “The volunteers raked and bagged leaves and picked up locust pods—they were wonderful! One the moms even stopped by for a visit a couple of days later, and one of the dads came back and fixed my culvert.”

North Fork Senior Connections started in Paonia, but this year we also focused on outreach to Hotchkiss and Crawford. Each community is unique, and its residents like it that way. But, if we’re lucky, aging comes to us all. Especially during those later years, a small amount of help can make a big difference. Just the knowledge that someone cares can lift us up.



Soup's On!

As part of our effort to combat food insecurity among Valley elders, we're again partnering with chef Chrys Bailey to provide quarts of hearty, nutritious, and comforting soups delivered twice a month. If this offering would make a difference in your life or help a senior in need, please contact us ASAP.

The menu includes leek & potato, chicken & rice, pinto bean, lamb & barley & split pea. GF & vegetarian options available.

This year we've added a limited number of sponsorships: receive a quart/ give a quart! Call 527.3482 for details.



A Great Time to Contribute!



North Fork Senior Connections is participating in Colorado Gives Day, held on December 10, which features statewide fundraising for nonprofits. However, early giving is open now, with a special promotion: they will double your contribution, up to \$100. Go to coloradogives.org for more information on how you can make a difference in the lives of elders in the North Fork Valley.

Armchair Travel at Paonia Senior Center!

Join the Haines family (of Chick-a-Pea catering) as they share their heartwarming experiences in **PERU!**

**Thursday,
December 12 @1:30**

Plan ahead and join a tasty Chick-a-Pea lunch at noon: reservations for meal at 970.527.3435 available starting 12/6.



A Christmas Classic Unlike the Rest!

If this holiday comedy has flown under your radar, don't miss this month's Senior Movie at the Paradise Theater. On Thursday, December 12, at 10AM, meet hobo Aloysius T. McKeever. He resides at a 5th Avenue mansion—but only when it's boarded-up each year while the second-richest man in the world winters at his Virginia estate. What could possibly go wrong? Enjoy this free holiday film & refreshments in 2024's last senior offering, and thank our local theater and outgoing Executive Director Michael Cooper for their support!




Please join us for a

NFSC HOLIDAY POTLUCK

Tuesday, 12/10 @noon

Let's thank our wonderful volunteers!

Featuring Dining Music & a Community Singalong with
Ellen Stapenhorst

We'll supply the Main Dishes

Please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert



December Birthdays

Happy Birthday to:



Steve Lyons 12/1
 Joyce Roberts 12/10
 Brownwen Barry 12/19
 Viva Kellogg 12/28
 Terry (Randall) Smith 12/31

Bella Deutsch 12/9
 Diane Gonzales 12/12
 Geoff Levens 12/27
 Bob McHugh 12/29

December Calendar

What's Happening at the Senior Center in November

Special Holiday Song Circle on December 10th - see poster page 2.

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

The Book Club at the Paonia Senior Center will take December off, but reconvene in January to talk about "Favorite Book of 2024!"

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 Mondays and 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. Please call for more info/to join.

Senior Meals- Paonia Senior Center 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, Wed and Thurs, all at noon. No reservation required, to-go orders available. 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

Coffee Klatch @Paonia Senior Center 9:30 AM December 2—Decorate the Senior Center for the Holidays!; December 9—Holistic Health with Norm Lewark

Catered lunches @ Paonia Senior Center Thursdays @ Noon. Rio Bravo 12/5; Chick-a-Pea 12/12 (see poster page 2); Sweetgrass 12/19. No lunch 12/26. Sign up starts Friday before next Thursday's lunch by calling 527.3435, emailing scmspaonia@gmail.com, or signing up in person at the Senior Center, noting date & time. \$5-6 per person

Welcome!

NFSC is excited to welcome Carol Jaques to our Board of Directors. She brings her background as a radio broadcaster in Washington D.C., a second career in counseling, and new enthusiasm to our organization.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:



Thanks to our generous coffee sponsor:
 Both Senior Connections and the Paonia Senior Center appreciate their support!



December
2024

Board of Directors

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Bonnie Eisenberg, Vice Chair
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Are you ready for some Christmas CHEER?!?
HILLERYZ will entertain you!!!

Singing reimagined Christmas songs in gay apparel!

Thursday
December 19th
1:00

Paonia Senior Center

Please join us for this fun, one hour show following lunch
provided by Sweetgrass!

Lunch starts at 12:00, for guests 60 & older.

LIMITED SEATING, so make your
lunch reservation, starting 12/13,
by calling (970) 527-3435.

**No reservations required
for show only, though!**

