

Fun Is Good for You: Why Seniors Need Play, Laughter, and Enjoyment

When we think about staying healthy as we age, we often focus on eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep, and keeping up with medical appointments. While all of these are important, there is another ingredient that deserves a place on the wellness checklist: having fun.

Fun isn't just a luxury or something to do when everything else is finished. Research shows that enjoyable activities can improve both physical and emotional health. Laughter reduces stress hormones, boosts the immune system, and can even help lower blood pressure. Activities that bring joy help us relax, recharge, and approach life's challenges with greater resilience.

Having fun also strengthens social connections. Whether it's playing cards with friends, joining a book club, singing in a group, attending a community event, or learning a new hobby, shared experiences create a sense of belonging. Social engagement is one of the strongest predictors of healthy aging, helping to reduce loneliness and isolation, which can have serious impacts on both physical and mental health.

Fun keeps the brain active, too. Trying something new—whether it's painting, dancing, mah-jong, gardening, or learning to use a new technology—creates opportunities for the brain to form new connections. Lifelong learning and curiosity help keep our minds sharp and engaged.

Perhaps most importantly, fun reminds us that life is meant to be enjoyed. Too often, older adults receive messages that aging is primarily about managing losses or limitations. While aging does bring challenges, it also offers opportunities for friendship, creativity, wisdom, and enjoyment. Moments of delight, laughter, and play can happen at any age.

The good news is that fun doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. It can be as simple as taking a walk with a friend, listening to favorite music, working on a puzzle, attending a community gathering, or sharing stories over a cup of coffee. The key is making time for activities that bring genuine pleasure.

At the North Fork Senior Connections, we believe that wellness includes joy. That's why we offer a variety of programs, classes, games, and social events designed not only to inform and support, but also to bring people together and create opportunities for fun.

So consider this your permission slip: make time for enjoyment. Laugh often, try something new, and connect with others. Your mind, body, and spirit will thank you.

Thank you to our generous recent donors: Kay Riggs, Bruce Woodside, Bonnie Eisenberg, Stacey and Brian Callahan, Margaret Stockton, Josh Roberts, Paula Martin and Andy Windsor, Sharon Ulrich, Dianne King and Anthony Reichenbach. Thank you to Jeff Holovet for the painting by his mom, Lynne Bear, and to Bev Clemmens for the bowls.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:



We appreciate your support!

Cooling and Purified Air Center

The Paonia Senior Center is now open to the community Monday-Friday from 1-4 pm as a cool, clean air space. Join in one of our programs, bring a book, sewing, play cards or a game with a friend, or just rest your eyes. You don't have to be a senior! All are welcome. 106 3rd St.

Correction:

The next Qigong class will be Tuesday, July 14 at 11:30 (NOT July 7) Future classes will be the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month 11:30-12:30. Optional Donation
Thank you, Brandon! (Paonia)

Senior Connections Job Openings

[Paid SAIL Instructor](#) The Crawford SAIL class is currently on hold while we find a new instructor. This opportunity is for 1 session on each of 2 days, with a minimum of 1 year commitment. We will train you. Contact Katie at 970-201-3423 or khedley@nfems.com

Our Aging in Place Resource Network

We're looking for a few community minded volunteers to help create a directory of services and providers that support Aging in Place in the North Fork Valley. Our goal is to compile a community resource list with contact information to help local seniors and their families find everything from healthcare and home maintenance to transportation, personal care, and other senior support services. Please email nfseniorconnections@gmail.com.

Neighborly Rides

Free transportation for seniors, within Delta County, for medical appointments, grocery shopping and other errands. Call 970-527-1735, several days in advance, to schedule a ride, or to request a driver application.

North Fork Senior Connections www.nfseniorconnections.org 970-527-3482 nfseniorconnections@gmail.com

Welcome to Cally Gallegos, our new Operations Manager

From Cally: "I was born and raised in Paonia, Colorado, where my family has lived for four generations. Growing up in this wonderful community helped shape the values I carry with me today. I am the proud mother of four children and grandmother of eight amazing grandchildren, who are the greatest joy in my life. When I'm not spending time with my family, I enjoy horseback riding, quilting, and a variety of crafts. Family, community, and creativity have always been at the heart of who I am."

Pickleball

Pickleball beginner lessons for all ages are 9:00 am Mondays at Apple Valley Park. The North Fork Pickleball Club along with Delta County have future dedicated courts planned at the Delta County Fairgrounds. For more information, and how you can get involved see our website at NFPickle.com.

Decreasing Newsletter Costs

1 – If you receive a paper copy of this newsletter but frequent the Paonia Senior Center, please plan to pick up a newsletter in person.
2 – If there is an extra page with photos, it will no longer be printed, but will be available online, and we will print a couple of copies you can look at in the senior center.

From p.3: Special Programs

Thursday, July 23, at 3 pm: [Heart Meets Canvas](#) with Ronna Webb - You are warmly invited to explore symbolic art as a form of expression and renewal. Through gentle guidance, colors, and brushstrokes, discover the freedom of creating without pressure or expectations. This is not about making a masterpiece – it's about relaxing, expressing yourself, and experiencing the healing power of art. No artistic skill or experience necessary! Donations for materials welcome. (Paonia)

July at a Glance

North Fork Senior Connections

Meals

Paonia VOA Lunch – Mon/Wed/Fri, Noon • 970-874-7661

Hotchkiss Senior Center – (\$4 donation) Tues/Wed/Thurs, Noon • 970-872-3494

Souper Tuesday with Anthony (Paonia) – (\$2-3 donation) July 7 Cream of broccoli with a cheddar biscuit garnish (no soup July 21)

Crawford Lunches – 1st and 3rd Wed (\$6-10)

- July 1 AP Catering
- July 15 Lazy J – Jason Wrich of Wrich

Ranch will speak about **Regenerative Agriculture**. Wrich Ranch is an intergenerational enterprise, whose mission is “to nourish land, animals, and people: mind, body, and soil.

To reserve call Wanda at 970-216-6345 or wgofforth@gmail.com

Paonia Thurs Catered Lunches (\$6-10) – Call 970-527-3435 to reserve Fri-Tues noon

- July 2 AP Catering
- July 9 Presto Market (formerly Flying Fork)
- July 16 Chrys Bailey
- July 23 Berg Harvest
- July 30 Clemie Bouton

Programs & Learning, Wellness & Exercise

(Paonia, except as noted)

Tues at 2:

- July 7 **Breathe to Save Your Life** with Derek Udy - (by donation)
- July 14 **Song Circle** with Ellen Stapenhorst
- July 21 TBD
- July 28 **Book Club**: US History

2nd and 4th Tuesdays: **Qigong** with Brandon Mason – (by donation), 11:30-12:30

(**Shakespeare Discussion Group** will return in September)

Write Your Life (Memoirs) Wednesdays 1:30 pm

Paonia Riverpark Walk Wednesdays 9 am, meet in the gazebo

Meditation Thurs 9 am

Stay Active and Independent for Life “SAIL” Classes:

- Hotchkiss: Mon/Thurs 9:30
- Paonia: Tues/Fri 8:45 and 10
- *Crawford classes are on hold till we find an instructor

Support Groups and Meetings

Dementia Caregivers Group (Hotchkiss) 2nd and 4th Wed, 1:30

Spoonies Chronic Illness Support Group (at the Hearth/Learning Council, Paonia) 3rd Saturday, 12:30-2

North Fork Senior Connections Board Meeting 2nd Tuesday, 11:30 (Paonia)

Special Programs in Paonia

Thursday, July 2, at 3 pm: **Quiet the Busy Mind with Simple Movement and Breath** with Mary Cain – Feeling anxious, distracted, or overwhelmed?

Join Mary for a gentle and practical series designed to help calm the mind and restore focus. Through easy cross-body movements and mindful breathing techniques, you'll learn simple tools to help cultivate greater calm and clarity.

Additional sessions Thursdays, July 9 and 16 at 3 pm (Paonia)

Optional donation

Wednesday, July 8, at 5:30 pm: **Remembering Ken Klatt** - We were saddened to hear of the death of our friend and community member Ken Klatt. Join us to remember Ken. (Paonia)

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North Fork Senior Connections

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

P.O. Box 1738 Paonia, CO 81428



July
2026

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S.A.I.L. class

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A game of mahjong
and participating in
Ronna Webb's art
workshop



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<https://nfseniorconnections.org/donate/>

Thank you for your support of NFSC!

North Fork Senior Connections www.nfseniorconnections.org 970-527-3482 nfseniorconnections@gmail.com