

RESPECT FOR
YESTERDAY,
SUPPORT FOR
TODAY,
PLAN FOR
TOMORROW



Aging Matters

May 2024 Newsletter from the Illinois Department on Aging

Office of
Governor JB
Pritzker

News and
Events

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Message From Acting Director Mary Killough



May is Older Americans Month - a time to celebrate the nearly 2.9 million Illinoisans aged 60 and older and the many ways they contribute to, support, and benefit from their communities. The 2024 Older Americans Month theme, "Powered by Connection," focuses on the profound impact that meaningful connections have on older adults' health, well-being, and even longevity.

This May, the Department on Aging is [promoting resources](#) that help older adults engage socially, plus help organizations and communities address root causes of social isolation.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), AAA-funded entities, Care Coordination Units, and Adult Day Services providers may also refer older adults who are socially or geographically isolated to IDoA's [Illinois Care Connections](#) program. The program operates in partnership with the [Illinois Assistive Technology Program](#) to provide free tablets and accessories to qualifying older adults, enabling them to connect with online resources, friends, and family.

Learn more about these and other programs for older adults on IDoA's [website](#) or by calling the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966.

Sincerely,

Celebrating Older Americans Month: Powered by



Established in 1963, Older Americans Month (OAM) is celebrated every May. Led by a federal agency, the Administration for Community Living (ACL), OAM is a time to recognize older Americans' contributions, highlight aging trends, and reaffirm commitments to serving the older adults in our communities.

This year's theme, "Powered by Connection," focuses on the profound impact that meaningful connections have on the well-being and health of older adults — a relationship underscored by the [U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#).

How can community groups, businesses, and organizations mark OAM?

- Spread the word about the mental, physical, and emotional health benefits of social connection through professional and personal networks.
- Encourage social media followers to share their thoughts and stories of connection using hashtag #PoweredByConnection to inspire and uplift.
- Promote opportunities to engage, like cultural activities, recreational programs, and interactive virtual events.
- Connect older adults with local services, such as counseling, that can help them overcome obstacles to meaningful relationships and access to support systems.
- Host connection-centric events or programs where older adults can serve as mentors to peers, younger adults, or youths.

What can individuals do to connect?

- Invite more connection into your life by finding a new passion, joining a social club, taking a class, or trying new activities in your community.
- Stay engaged in your community by giving back through volunteering, working, teaching, or mentoring.
- Invest time with people to build new relationships and discover deeper connections with your family, friends, colleagues, or neighbors.

For more information, visit the official [OAM website](#) and follow ACL on [X](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Join the conversation on social media using the hashtag #OlderAmericansMonth.

[Read Governor Pritzker's OAM proclamation](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month



There is hope.



If you or someone you know needs support now,
call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

We all know good mental health is an important part of our quality of life. But barriers still exist when it comes to getting support and treatment for mental illness. In fact, [two-thirds of older adults](#) with mental health problems do not receive the treatment they need, according to the [National Council on Aging](#).

If you're experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression, you're not alone; mental health disorders affect millions of older Americans. Help is available, and healing is possible. The earlier you identify and treat your symptoms, the faster you'll be able to feel better.

Start by taking [an online screening from Mental Health America](#). This is a free, anonymous, and 100% confidential way to learn about your personal mental health. While this tool is not the same as an official diagnosis, it can help you [start a conversation with your health care provider](#) or loved ones.

If you or someone you know is in crisis and would like to talk to a trained counselor, dial or text 988 from your phone to reach the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). This service is free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Caregiving and Mental Health

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) can use a tool called [TCARE](#) to identify caregivers at risk of burnout and connect them with mental health and support services. These may include training programs such as [Savvy Caregiver](#)®, [Stress-Busting for Family Caregivers](#)™, support groups, counseling services, and gap-filling services. If you are interested in learning more, contact your local AAA using IDoA's [map tool](#).

**Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage
Month**



Every May, the nation honors and recognizes Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month by uplifting the contributions and history of AAPI communities. Here, *Aging Matters* is proud to elevate the contributions of M. Linda Yu, an accomplished chemical engineer, the founder of a non-profit serving student musicians, and a recent appointee to the [Illinois Council on Aging](#).

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

First, tell our readers a little about yourself. How do you work with older adults in your community?

I was born in China, grew up in Taiwan, and came to the United States after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering from Taiwan University. I earned my Ph.D. in physical chemistry/catalysis from Texas A&M University. My professional career involved air pollution control technologies and water treatment for electric utilities and industrial plants.

I have been a volunteer [Senior Health Insurance Program](#) (SHIP) counselor since 2013 and am the United Chinese Americans' Illinois SHIP site coordinator. I am also the founder and president of a non-profit organization, Orchestra Parents/Patrons' United Support (OPUS), that provides beautiful chamber and orchestral music learning and performing opportunities for young musicians in the Chicago area. OPUS students and professionals perform many concerts for older adults and veterans at senior residences and concert halls every year. Our OPUS activities are aimed at connecting the young with the elderly as a part of our young musicians' experiences.

The 2024 theme for AANHPI Heritage Month is Advancing Leaders Through Innovation. Throughout your career, you've certainly contributed to innovative technological advancements, holding 23

U.S. patents! Tell us more about your accomplishments in science and engineering—what contributions are you most proud of and why?

I worked for 30 years at Ecolab-Nalco and 21 years for its spin-off, Nalco-Fuel Tech/Fuel Tech. I retired as the Senior Vice President for Asia - Pacific Rim. I worked for several years as an independent consultant until the age of 69. I am proud of my professional legacy – 23 U.S. patents carry my name. In 2006-2007, I was also an adjunct faculty member teaching environmental management in the evenings at IIT's Stewart Business School MBA program.

Editor's note: Most of Yu's inventions focused on air pollution control technologies.

My biggest impact was that I was asked to help guide the setting of power plant emissions regulations for China's Five-Year Plans until the beginning of the 2015 Plan. I reviewed, critiqued, and suggested revisions on upcoming regulations based on cost-performance data. The regulations are set with tighter emission standards for each Plan period, and the industries are provided with cost-efficiency technology recommendations. I logged 100 trips to China during this time and was familiar with the tremendous growth of China's power industry.

Serving the community, I brought a 4th grade class to Nalco [a Naperville-based water and process treatment company] to observe experiments when my son was in 4th grade. Immediately following that event, this initiative was formalized into a "Science is Fun!" program where any two coworkers could take a ready-to-go kit to perform a dozen experiment in a one-hour scientific demonstration in front of 3rd graders at their schools. The goal is to make students more aware that they already are doing scientific things daily and they too can be a scientist in the everyday world. In one year, we performed for about 15,000 3rd graders in the Chicago area.

What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I started learning to play the violin at age 52 and began to sing opera arias at age 62. I regularly play in the US Tennis Association league and tournament tennis at age 72 because the pandemic restricted friends playing together.

IACCPHP Honors Homecare Aides



The Illinois Association of Community Care Program Homecare Providers (IACCPHP) honored four winners of the Mary I. Hill Homecare Aide of the Year Award during an awards luncheon at the Inn at 835 Boutique Hotel in Springfield on May 9.

Winners

Linda Deweese, AddusHomeCare
Tew Sok (Irene) Granados, Chinese Mutual Aid Association
Janice Eldred, Fox Valley Community Services
Jeannie Bradshaw, Senior Services Plus

Honorable Mentions

Ginka Aleksandrova, Abcor Home Health
Jagjit Barham, Universal Industries
Maria Barrios, Abcor Home Health
Angela Clay, Help at Home
Ericka Crockett, Healthcare Plus
Dawn Marie Delanty, European Service at Home
Magdalena Deveaux, Healthcare Plus
Bharchua Dipika, Sahara Homecare
Lakenya Howard, European Services at Home
Mary-Beth Hughes, Mason County Health Department
Krishna Kafle, Universal Industries
Muhammad Khan, Sahara Homecare
Nicole McGinnis, Chinese Mutual Aid Association
Chaundra McIntyre, Addus HomeCare
Stanley McMaster, Help at Home
Gilda Pipersburgh, Help at Home
Yolanda Riley, New Age Elder Care
Shylynn Robinson, Abcor Home Health
Dorothy Schaefer, Henry County Home Services
Elids Vega, New Age Elder Care

Nominations Due Soon for Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame



The Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame honors the accomplishments of current and longtime Illinois residents aged 65 and older. Inductees are selected from public nominations in four categories:

- Arts, sports, and entertainment
- Community service
- Education
- Labor

Anyone may nominate an older adult for this award, though self-nominations are prohibited. Nominators of 2024 Hall of Fame inductees are expected to help coordinate and participate in an award ceremony, to be scheduled this fall, honoring their nominee.

Nominations must be [submitted electronically](#) or postmarked on or before **June 1, 2024**, to be considered for the induction Class of 2024. Nominations are evaluated and scored by members of the [Illinois Council on Aging](#), a state-led advisory group of aging experts and older adults.

Since its inception 30 years ago, the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame has inducted 137 inspiring older adults. View past inductees, find more information, or submit a nomination [here](#).

[Nominate an outstanding older adult](#)

Monthly Scam Spotlight: The Grandparent Scam

What is the Grandparent Scam?

The grandparent scam is a type of fraud where a scammer contacts an older adult via phone call, text message, social media, or email, pretending to be their grandchild or another close relative in a crisis situation, asking for immediate financial assistance. In many cases, the scammer is able to give the grandchild's name and imitate their way of speaking based on information collected from social media. The scammer may also pretend to be a law

enforcement officer or attorney representing the grandchild. The scammer claims the grandchild is in trouble with the law and needs some quick cash.



How to Spot a Grandparent Scam

- The caller gives urgent ultimatums, such as if the person doesn't act immediately, something bad will happen.
- Someone is asking for money for expenses that are not normal or haven't been discussed in previous in-person conversations. Often, the expenses are out of character for the loved one.
- The demand for urgent payment doesn't align with common sense knowledge about how things work, but the scammer purposefully offers confusing, forceful, and frightening information that makes it harder to think calmly about the scenario.
- The instructions are for non-traceable or suspect payment methods, including wire transfers, cash in small bills, or gift cards.
- Calls come in late at night or at other times designed to instill confusion and fear.
- The instructions include demands for secrecy, such as not telling other relatives or the authorities about the issue.

Tips to Avoid the Grandparent Scam

- Ask the caller hard-to-answer questions to verify the caller's identity.
- Avoid acting immediately. Before you do anything, reach out to the loved one via a trusted contact method. Making direct contact lets you ensure they are okay and allows you to verify the story. In most cases, you'll find out the loved one is not involved with the original phone call and is safely going about their day.
- In most cases, no one needs money immediately and they certainly don't need it via gift cards or small bills.
- Avoid providing extra information that could fill in the blanks for a potential scammer.
- Don't be afraid to say no and hang up. Scammers often prey on emotions, so it's crucial to keep a level head.

Reporting a Grandparent Scam

- Contact your bank immediately to stop or reverse any transactions.
- Report the crime to your local law enforcement agency.
- File a report with the Federal Trade Commission at 877-382-4357.
- Report the scam to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

Employment Opportunities

IDoA has no employment openings at this time. Vacancies will be posted to [this page](#) as positions become available.

Save the Date



Our Area Agencies on Aging are celebrating 50 years of serving older adults in their communities! Pictured above, AgeGuide's 50th annual meeting & luncheon on April 25 featured former AgeGuide executive directors Lucia West Jones and Charles Johnson (also a former IDoA director) as keynote speakers.

Upcoming Area Agency on Aging 50th anniversary celebrations

AgeLinc: Tuesday, May 28 at the Crown Plaza Springfield's rooftop bar
RSVP by May 20 to slinde@agelinc.org or 217-787-9234.

AgeOptions: Thursday, June 20 at the Hyatt Lodge Oak Brook
RSVP at [this link](#).



Medicare Fraud Prevention Week #MFPW



[ACL.GOV/MFPW24](https://acl.gov/mfpw24)

Every June, the Administration for Community Living and its [Senior Medicare Patrol Resource Center](#) lead the nation's observance of Medicare Fraud Prevention Week (MFPW). Established in 2022, this week focuses on raising awareness of the actions everyone can take to prevent Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.

Visit the [MCFW webpage](#) for more information and ready-to-share content like videos and graphics.

The [Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging](#) will meet on Wednesday, June 5 at 2 p.m.

[Join via Webex](#)



WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Building Strong Support for Elders

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD).

The Administration for Community Living has [compiled](#) some of the many upcoming [events](#), activities, and resources available to help you be a part of WEAAD and the movement for elder justice.

Items of Interest

Register for Elder Care Services' [Strides for Change abuse awareness walk](#)

[Illinois invests \\$11.4 million in Rockton senior affordable housing](#)

FEMA disaster preparedness guides for [older adults](#) and [caregivers](#)

[How to age better than your parents](#)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the **Senior HelpLine at (800) 252-8966; 711 (TRS)**

