

OAI Interns Make a Difference

The Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) has been sponsoring interns for the past fifty years. “Student interns bring tremendous value to OAI,” says Ofelia Ott, OAI administrator. “They infuse our work with fresh ideas and new perspectives, deepen our outreach, strengthen program development, and expand our capacity in meaningful ways.” Discover why five emerging professionals chose to intern with the Office on Aging and Independence.



Katherine Taylor is exploring her interest in nutrition at 50+ centers while forming intergenerational relationships to connect with older adults.

Shiowei Cheng, MSW – University of Maryland, Baltimore
Aging is such a big part of life but often so little understood or even stigmatized. I want to imagine a world where the process of aging is given more space, grace, and resources so that as a society, we can face it with more understanding and equality. I hope to learn from the diverse people I will get to meet, and learn how to help them find more connection to resources.

Sarah Vinci, MSW – Salisbury University
My grandfather had Dementia for many years; when his condition worsened, he entered the hospital and a nursing home where he was not treated well. This sparked my interest in social work and the field of aging to support older adults’ ability to live semi-independently while continuing the activities they enjoy. By exploring the programs and grants that benefit both older adults and those with disabilities, I am learning about aging in multiple environments: OAI’s 50+ Centers and in the community.

Jillian Savageau, MS – Towson University
Modern medicine and advances in occupational therapy are allowing us to live longer. But there is a growing concern for lack of support for older adults and facilities that address this population such as nursing homes. Offering solutions for older adults to age in place in their homes can improve quality of life, alleviate stress and anxiety, and help them adjust to age-related changes that occur naturally.

Katherine Taylor, BS, Psychology – UMBC
Good nutrition is an important factor in how we grow and age. I love working with others and want to spread education and awareness about physical and mental health to aging populations. The concept of aging well varies greatly among older adults – for me it means aging with movement as a daily part of life, eating healthily, feeling cognitively well, and being surrounded by a support system that encourages healthy habits.

Saugat Mishra, BS, Information Systems – UMBC
I want to help bridge the learning gap and help older adults adapt to new technology. For me, aging well means living independently for

From the desk of Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive



In these challenging times, I am heartened by the outpouring of generosity from our community to assist those affected by the government shutdown, including more than 5,000 pounds of food donated last month in our one-day collection event alone. These donations were distributed to the Howard County Food Bank, Columbia Community Care and other organizations at the forefront of helping our neighbors in need. For a list of food resources, visit www.hclhic.org/foodmap.

As the holidays approach, many families and older adults in our community will continue to need – and appreciate – the help of our neighbors. To benefit our youngest residents, I’m thrilled to announce our annual Toys for Tots distribution event will be held December 20th. Donations of new, unwrapped toys will be accepted at all 50+ Centers until noon on December 15th to bring joy to children throughout Howard County.

For older adult residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities or those living alone in the community, our Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) is proud to continue Project Holiday, a heartwarming initiative for those who otherwise might not receive a gift or visit during the holidays. Each year, the outpouring of support from individuals, groups, partner agencies and volunteers results in thousands of donations that translate into holiday cheer for more than 300 residents.

No matter your age or the holidays you celebrate, we all share a unique Howard County connection. Staying connected is important for all of us, and it’s especially vital for older adults. I am thankful that OAI offers many programs and events to foster social connections and support mental and physical health as we age.

Visit one of our 50+ Centers for lunch, make new friendships and celebrate the season. If you need assistance with caregiving, Medicare options, future planning, housing options and more, I encourage you to reach out to OAI and its Maryland Access Point (MAP), for assistance at 410-313-1234 or map@howardcountymd.gov.

Thank you for helping make Howard County a warm and inviting place to live, work and play. Happy holidays!

as long as possible, maintaining the ability to function normally. This internship allows me to grow as a person and learn about the culture of organizations like OAI where everyone is motivated to make a difference in someone else’s life.

The internship experience allows OAI to introduce emerging professionals to the impact and purpose of the aging services field, helping build the future workforce our community will depend on. Learn more and apply today at <https://bit.ly/OAI-Internships>.

December Events at Howard County 50+ Centers



PROJECT HOLIDAY



Support Project Holiday

Through December 6 • Howard County 50+ Centers

As we begin the season of giving, OAI is calling on our community to come together to show support for older adults in our community who otherwise may not receive a holiday gift. There are MANY ways for individuals, groups and organizations to get involved – visit howardcountymd.gov/projectholiday for a list of suggested donation items, a link to our Amazon wish list, a link for monetary donations, volunteer opportunities, and the 50+ Center drop off locations and hours. Please note that donation items should be new and unwrapped. Thank you for your support!

Piano and Voice Lessons

Ellicott City 50+ Center • Mondays/Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. | A02904.501

Have you taken piano lessons in the past and want to start playing again? Or are you ready for a new musical endeavor? Receive one-on-one instruction with Master Pianist Diane Waslick. Sign up at the front desk or call 410-313-1400. Cost: \$47 per class.

Holiday Craft Show

Ellicott City 50+ Center
December 5, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Admission: \$1

Shop for one-of-a-kind and handcrafted items from more than 40 vendors: knitted gifts, jellies & jams, nuts and chutney, stained glass, embroidered towels, bags, beaded wares, jewelry and more. Admission (\$1.00) benefits Small Miracles Cat & Dog Rescue.



9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046
410-313-6410 (VOICE/RELAY) • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

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Listen to the HoCo Community Chat podcast on Buzzsprout

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Senior Planet: Technology for Aging in Place

Glenwood 50+ Center • December 9, 11 a.m. – noon

A20673.508

Learn how home assistants, smart appliances, and wearables can save you time and money, help you manage health conditions, and even give you greater peace of mind. Explore best practices to maintain privacy and security when using this technology.

Baltimore Scandals

Bain 50+ Center • December 9, 11 a.m. – noon • A01942.500

Explore scandals that shocked Baltimore and the nation, now largely forgotten. Join historian Jennifer Liles to explore Baltimore's people and why Baltimore was called "Mobtown."

Bain's Annual Holiday Party

Bain 50+ Center • December 10, 10:30 – noon

Tickets on sale at Bain Front Desk

Delight in traditional holiday music performed by HCC, Bain's Gospel Choir, and the soulful sounds of Julia's Heart. Celebrate the spirit of the season with good friends, food and festive music. Program is free; lunch is by donation. Doors open at 10 a.m.

Healthy Hips: Injury Prevention & Management

East Columbia 50+ Center • December 10, 11 a.m. – noon

A04104.500

Hip injuries can affect mobility and independence. Physical Therapist Renuka Jain will review the types of hip injuries, how to recognize early warning signs, and strategies to prevent and manage injuries to keep your hips strong and pain free.

A Not-So-Silent Night Holiday Musical

North Laurel 50+ Center • December 12, 11 a.m. – noon

A06550.503

Don't miss a not-so-silent holiday musical extravaganza. Come join us to rock around the clock to some holiday favorite tunes!

Age Wisely with MAP: Care Matters for You

North Laurel 50+ Center • December 16, 10:30 – 11 a.m. • A26631.503

Claudia Mixco, Maryland Access Point Specialist, will explore care options, what each provides, and how to find the best fit for your needs or those of a loved one. Get practical tips to evaluate providers, understand costs, and make informed decisions with confidence.

The Fabulous 50+ Players: Holiday Performance

Elkridge 50+ Center • December 22, 1 – 2 p.m. • A05510.500

The Fabulous 50+ Players are back with a musical program showcasing a wide range of festive music celebrating the holiday season.

Pop Up Group Fitness Class: Mindful Reflection

Ellicott City Fitness Center • December 29, 11 a.m. – noon

A02401.504

Close out the year with a Hatha Yoga practice that combines gentle postures, mindful movement, and calming meditation. The class supports relaxation, flexibility, and inner balance. Participants should be comfortable getting up and down from the floor.

**To register or find more events,
visit bit.ly/HoCoRegistration**