

HoCo Home Share Supports Aging in Place



HoCo Home Share is a new program that addresses two pressing needs in Howard County: rising housing costs and the desire of many older adults to maintain their independence in their own homes. Operated by Bridges to Housing Stability, which has provided housing services to Howard County residents for 35 years, the program matches homeowners who have a spare bedroom with individuals seeking an affordable place to live. The results: mutually beneficial arrangements that strengthen financial stability, social connection and housing choice. The program prioritizes safety, compatibility and privacy. All participants are screened through background and reference checks, homes are inspected for safety, participants are matched based on compatibility, and potential matches are introduced gradually – without sharing identifying information until both parties are ready. Participants work together to create a written home-sharing agreement that clarifies expectations around privacy, shared spaces and household norms. Renters also sign a lease with the homeowner. Free mediation support is provided throughout the process.

Bridges values the role that the Office of Aging and Independence (OAI) is taking in outreach to older adults. OAI’s trusted position in the community and deep understanding of aging-in-place needs help ensure that older adults learn about home sharing through a reliable and familiar source. “Home sharing works best when it’s built on trust and support,” says Bridges’ Executive Director, Jennifer Broderick. “Partnering with OAI allows us to reach older adults in a way that respects their independence while offering practical housing opportunities.”

Home sharing also advances Howard County’s Age-Friendly goals. “Home sharing is an important part of building a livable, age-friendly community,” says OAI Administrator Ofelia Ross Ott. “Programs like HoCo Home Share help address affordable housing needs while allowing older adults to remain in their homes, maintain independence, and stay connected to their community. OAI is pleased to support this

From the desk of Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive



Just released, the 2025-2029 Age-Friendly Howard County Action Plan continues our commitment to making Howard County a truly inclusive and accessible place for our residents to thrive in their older years. Since we first launched our Age-Friendly Initiative in 2019, we have created spaces and opportunities for our older residents to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. We opened state-of-the-art 50+ Centers with world-class amenities and programs to encourage socialization and decrease isolation. We created outdoor spaces for older adults to stay active and engage with others at our local parks, including the Age-Friendly Fitness Lot and Tables for Connection.

The new Action Plan focuses on three Key Pillars of Livability: Health & Wellbeing, Living & Mobility, and Community & Inclusion, which, once approved by AARP, will serve as a roadmap for us to target opportunities for improvement, engage in effective collaboration, and act on community priorities. Guided by the Age-Friendly Howard County theme of Collaboration, the plan was developed using input from more than 100 community members who shared their vision for an Age-Friendly Howard County during seven community listening sessions. Their vital input showed us where our challenges lie: transportation, housing, healthcare gaps, and public safety.

Everyone has a role in making Howard County age-friendly and we are encouraged to see people of all ages working together to achieve these goals. Learn more and view the action plan at www.howardcountymd.gov/Age-Friendly. Thank you for your support.

work by referring residents and raising awareness of this innovative housing option.”

Some participants will also value the added sense of connection or reassurance that comes from sharing a home – while maintaining choice and control. “This is about aging in place with dignity,” Broderick emphasizes, “and having options that support both financial and social well-being. These are also key determinants of health.”

Together, Bridges and OAI are helping residents make the most of existing homes – supporting independence, affordability, and community connections.

HoCo Home Share is free for all participants, thanks to funding from the County’s Department of Housing and Community Development. For more information, visit www.bridges2hs.org/hoco-home-share, call 410-312-5760 x121 or email hocohomeshare@bridges2hs.org.

February Events at Howard County 50+ Centers

Johns Hopkins: Cardiovascular Disease Advances

Glenwood 50+ Center • February 5, 9 – 10:30 a.m. • A03636.600

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., but progress is on the horizon. Eric Schwartz, MD, Chairman, Department of Medicine at Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center, will discuss the latest advances in cardiac technology. RSVP to Kirsten Potter, JHHC-Events@jh.edu.

Third Annual Kick-Out Cancer Event

Bain 50+ Center • February 4, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. • A01495.600

In honor of World Cancer Day, join us to punch, kick and sweat for a good cause. This Cardio Kickboxing class is a collaboration with the Claudia Mayer/Tina Broccolino Cancer Resource Center; a \$5 donation benefits the CMTBCRC. No kickboxing experience required. For questions, contact Michelle Rosenfeld at 410-313-7394.

Black History Month: Name That Famous Person Black History Trivia

Bain 50+ Center • February 10, 11 a.m. – noon • A01540.600

Join us for an interactive trivia game celebrating influential Black historical figures. Participants will listen to short biographies or clues about notable individuals in history, arts, culture, science, sports, and civil rights — and then guess who the person is.

Lunar New Year Celebration with CASA & KASA

Bain 50+ Center • February 17, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. • A01726.600

Let's ring in the Year of the Fire Horse together! Join the festivities as we honor tradition, share joyful moments, and welcome a bright new year. Light Refreshments served.

Kindred Spirits Social Club Open House

Glenwood 50+ Center • February 12, 10 a.m. – noon

Join us in the Connections Room for a Kindred Spirits Open House to meet staff, learn about the social club and meet others with early-stage memory loss and their families. Light refreshments served. For more information, contact Felicia Stein at 410-313-1425 or fstein@howardcountymd.gov.

Walk with OAI at the Mall in Columbia

February 20, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. • A20712.601

Join a group walk around the Mall with OAI Fitness Coordinator, Jen Higdon (all walking levels welcome). This event is part of OAI's Mall walking sponsorship and broader efforts to promote healthy, active living for older adults.

Thriving Solo Together Meet & Greet

Bain 50+ Center • February 24, 1 – 2 p.m. • A01123.601

Meet others living solo and learn about the new support group focused on planning, advocating and thriving in the future. Coming in March, Thriving Solo Together is a facilitated group sponsored by OAI's SeniorsTogether. For information or to register, contact Karen Hull at 410-313-7466 or khull@howardcountymd.gov.

Will You Be My Valentine?

Ellicott City 50+ Center • February 27, 2 – 3 p.m. • A02744.602

Visiting Angels will host a Valentine's Day Tea Party at the center. Enjoy an afternoon filled with conversation, sweet treats, and a selection of teas to celebrate friendship, kindness and the joy of connection. Cost: \$2.

Learn to Play Chess

Elkridge 50+ Center • Wednesdays, March 4 – April 1, 1 – 2:30 p.m. • A05611.602

Learn how to play chess in this beginner-friendly class. Each session builds on the previous lesson to develop confidence and skill as you learn the fundamentals of the game. Cost: \$5. Bring a chess set to class. For information or to register, call 410-313-5192.

DIY Winter Luminary

Elkridge 50+ Center • March 5, 1:30 – 3 p.m. • A05555.600

Create a glowing jar with colorful tissue paper and a flickering LED candle to brighten your winter décor. No experience needed; just bring your creative spirit to enjoy conversation and crafting fun.



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410-313-6410 (VOICE/RELAY) • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

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Howard County
Office on Aging and Independence
**WINTER WELLNESS
FITNESS CHALLENGE**

An eight-week health and fitness challenge from
February 2 through March 28.
Attend a fitness class, virtual class or exercise at
one of the six 50+ Centers.

Participants can earn a prize by completing
the required number of workouts.
Registration opens January 15.