

Chatterbox August 2023

Before diving into the exciting things happening at BRC mixed with the summer heat, let's take a stroll down memory lane. The year was 1976 when a great thought came to mind of how to better serve the community and take care of those who reside in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn, NY. Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC) put forth the idea of providing food and other relevant services in motion for members and neighbors alike. They offered a kitchen to cook and space to hold programs for older adults and founded the Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults (BRCOA). Years went by, 35 to be exact, and with the support of BELC, founding staff & community partners that believed and supported the mission from the beginning, BRCOA submitted the request for a certificate of Incorporation to NYS Dept of State. It was a cold winter day in 2011 when Bay Ridge Center, Inc was granted its namesake and incorporation status operating under the Not-for-Profit umbrella. Who knew that a daily nutritious meal and someone to assist with day to day life events & recreation activities would grow into something so meaningful & prominent known to us in this day & age as "Aging Services."



I'm convinced that summertime must be our season! Fast forward to summer of 2021 when BRC eagerly waited for a response after submitting a packet for the published RFP allowing current and new Aging service providers to expand or start up one of two services; Senior Center or NORC program. NYC Aging, at the time known as Department for The Aging (DFTA), began to ask us for little things that seemed appropriate with receiving an award letter. Sure enough we were right, a new building and world of possibilities was awarded to the center who started with just a meal program and a place of retreat for seniors in the community. Aging services has come so far with a main focus of aging in place while having fun along the way. There is no better opportunity than the one bestowed upon us in this moment. 15 Bay Ridge Ave aka 15BRAVE is brewing like a smooth coffee roast sure to stimulate your mind & body taking nothing for granted. We call it BRAVE because we are BRAVE enough to present an innovative, captivating experience like none other. Oh the fun we're having doing this together for YOU!

Speaking of fun, did I mention we have fun in everything we do. It's summertime and we wouldn't have it any other way in our season! BRC's Annual Summer Celebration took place at the end of June showing an appreciation for our community partners, local elected officials. The day was filled with food, gift baskets, giveaways, great music and dancing of course. The rain held up and allowed us to enjoy those who support & believe in everything we stand for. Our very own members celebrate each other monthly with a party to remind us that they still can "cut a rug." We the staff joined in the fun as well, with a cookout before the holiday weekend to celebrate us for all we have accomplished throughout the years. It's true, teamwork makes the dream work. It's a great time to be a member, community partner and a part of the BRC staff during our expansion and transition period! I'm proud to say we are operationally sound, and I thank each one of you for your membership, partnership, and collaboration. It's never too late to join the fun, for more information on becoming a member of the center or community partner, please call the office at 718-748-0650 or stop by between 8am-4pm located at 6935 4th Avenue and let the receptionist know you are ready to join in on all the fun. Tell a friend to tell a friend to tell a friend.

In the meantime, stay hydrated, keep cool and get ready for what's to come, we're just getting started. See you soon 😊

Candice Sessoms, M.Ed.
Director of Operations/QA



Dear Members,

I know that all who attended the Summer Celebration of Giving last month join me in thanking everyone who took part in making this yearly event special.

We all look forward to this event each year and, for me, this day was more than just special. Todd honored me for my 20 years of service to the Bay Ridge Center. Looking over the area of attendees that afternoon, I realized, more than ever, how fortunate I am to be surrounded by the most giving people of all; the other honorees, Pastor Paul, our amazing staff, the Community Advisory Board, the Board of Directors, the Senior Advisory Council, supporters of the Community and volunteers just like me.

I would like to thank everyone who has already made a commitment to attend the Senior Advisory Council's fundraiser for the Bay Ridge Center. For those who have not yet signed up, we are counting on your support. The dinner and dance will be held at Sirico's on Saturday, August 12th from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The price is \$80.00 which includes a 4-course meal; beer, wine, and soda; and music by DJ Victor who will keep you on your feet. Keep in mind that this is a fundraiser for our Center and an afternoon for you to enjoy yourself as well. All are invited with family and friends. Please see me at the Center or call me 718-833-3731 for your reservation.

On August 4th we will have Friday night bingo with doors opening at 3:30 pm. At 4:30 pm, we will begin the bingo games and call with the final pizza count. The price of admission is \$15.00, at the door, which covers the price of 4 bingo cards, 2 slices of pizza and soda. We will play 15 games with a winning prize of \$10.00 for each game. The evening usually ends around 7:00 pm. Bring your family and friends for an enjoyable time. We appreciate your support.

On Tuesday, August 15th, we will have our summer beach party and celebrate August birthdays with a party from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Purchase your tickets from Kathy for \$3.00 before Friday, August 11th. Lunch donation on party day is the usual \$2.00.

On Wednesday, August 2nd, we have a trip planned to City Island in the Bronx for lunch at the Original Crab Shanty. The last day to sign up is Friday, July 28th. We will call the lottery on Friday morning.

On Wednesday, August 16th, we have a trip planned to the Resorts Casino in Queens. Sign up days are August 7th ending Friday, August 11th. We will call the lottery on Friday morning.

On Wednesday, August 30th, we have a trip planned to Walmart and Cracker Barrel in New Jersey. Sign up days are August 21st ending Friday, August 25th. If we have 20 people or more, we can use 2 vans, otherwise we will call the lottery on Friday morning.

Thank you and be kind to each other.

Sonia Adamski

Senior Advisory Council President



IMPORTANT DATES

AUGUST 19TH - WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

AUGUST 26TH - WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

August the Auspicious Month

By David Dring, Director of Innovative Programs for Older Adults

For the history buffs, the month of August is named after Caesar Augustus considered one of Rome's most "successful" leaders. (That is successful for Rome, not necessary the rest of the word.) The month is then associated with auspicious, which I believe is an appropriate word for Bay Ridge Center. The new center's construction is moving rapidly along. We are slated to move-in in October. That will launch Bay Ridge Center on an auspicious journey to serve more older adults throughout Southwest Brooklyn. These are exciting times.

While NYC often slows down during the heat of August, Bay Ridge Center will continue with its slate of programming. One class is Bingocize. This engaging combination of bingo, exercise and health education is one of the evidence-based programs that are offered at the Center. These programs have been tested and proven to provide positive impact on those that participate. Tess Allon and Mary Ann Coughlin are leading this fun class. It's scheduled for 2 pm on Mondays and Fridays ... right after traditional bingo. Please join us.

Another new class for us is Digital Drawing. This class is provided by a new instructor for us, Hildos (her artistic name). We'll provide tablets and styluses for those that don't have them and want to participate. The class will use the free software "Sketchbook." Over an eight-week period, the class will journey with Hildos from understanding the software to producing their own creations. We are excited to see what's created.

We were selected by Kristen Cordero to conduct her certifying healing sound and meditation class at the Center. Many of you may have experienced the awesome Sound Healing & Meditation class at Connects. We are delighted to offer these restorative programs at both locations.

I have some exciting news to report. I'll be leaving Bay Ridge Center on Friday, August 11th. It's a bittersweet experience for me as I have loved working and serving all of you. We made it through the Pandemic together and participated in many fun classes. It's been great to see you all progress with technology as well. The staff and members at Bay Ridge Center are amazing! My new gig will be with NYC Aging where I will be an Assistant Commissioner. It's a full circle for me as I used to work there 30 years ago. I wish you all well, I won't be far and will always advocate to ensure Bay Ridge Center prospers.

I Choose Wellness

By Mary Ann Coughlin PT, Health Care Coordinator

August is National Wellness Month. A whole month devoted to one of my favorite topics! Let's focus on some small changes that we can make in our lives to promote a feeling of wellness. Research has shown that self care and creating healthy routines promote happiness, manage stress and makes life more enjoyable. Small daily changes can lead to a lifetime of wellness. I have some suggestions but I would like to encourage you to write down on your calendar a small change you would like to make for that day. You might be surprised and be able to fill in every day. These are the things that I will be putting on my calendar and believe it or not they are not all exercise related.

- Go to bed an hour earlier
- Unplug my computer and phone for an afternoon
- Spend a few hours by the ocean
- Try a new exercise class
- Tidy up my space (my whole house is too much!)
- Do yoga
- Go for a walk
- Talk to a friend I haven't seen in awhile
- Sit in my garden (and watch the spotted lanternflies!)
- Listen to the birds
- Practice tai chi
- Spend the day with my family and not think about all the things that I need to do!

Hmmm, I actually could fill up my calendar for the whole month! But, that might stress me out so I am going to stop here and make these changes a part of my routine. I would love to hear what you have added to your calendar.

Happy August from Connects! By Ashley Witherell, NNORC Director

As the summer sun continues to shine bright, we're thrilled to experience another exciting lineup of programming that awaits you this August. Our mission remains; to create a one-stop-shop full of various supports for the older adults in our neighborhood, while fostering social connections and promoting well-being, and our monthly activities do just that! This month, I'd like to highlight a few of our programs that are a great fit for all.



Tai Chi

Join us every Tuesday at 12:30pm for our peaceful and energizing 'Tai Chi' class, designed to enhance balance and flexibility. Led by our skilled instructor, Kim Brantley, this timeless practice is perfect for participants of all fitness levels. Let's embrace the harmony of mind and body together!



Collage & Mixed Media

Unleash your creativity in our 'Collage and Mixed Media' class every Friday at 11:00am. Join our instructor, Kristin Reiber-Harris, where you'll explore the world of art with an abundance of crafts, collaging and mixed media. Come tap into your creativity and discover the joy of self-expression through this fun and therapeutic artistic journey!



Technology for Beginners

We're delighted to introduce our newest offering – 'Technology for Beginners' with our case manager, Sam Stein. Every Monday at 1:30pm, stop by to learn the ropes of smart phones, & gain confidence in navigating the tech-savvy world. Don't let technology intimidate you; we're here to support & teach you!

THE STIGMATIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS By Zaza Kandakai, Tenant Care Director



The mischaracterization of homelessness has left some people with little or no regard for the homeless population. Noticeably, homelessness is becoming a widespread issue around the country and in most cases the victims are blamed for it. The biggest misconceptions are the homeless are either lazy or substance abusers. Why it is true that laziness and drug use contribute to homelessness to some extent, but categorizing homelessness in general to laziness and drug used is unfair to those who are homeless due to no fault of their own; some are just victims of circumstances. I once had a conversation with someone in the shelter where I worked years ago, he told me he was married for 26 years.

He and his wife lived in an apartment, which was in her name. Things were fine; therefore, he did not bother to add his name to the lease. Unfortunately, she lost the battle to cancer. A month after she was laid to rest, the building management issued him an eviction notice because he was not on the lease. He had no choice but to put his belongings in storage and moved in the shelter, according to him. Could it be that the building management gave him an option to sign a new lease or vacate the apartment and he decided to leave? I do not know. What I know for fact is that everybody's situation is different. If what he told me is true, then his homelessness cannot be attributed to laziness or substance abuse.

Sunset Ridge is identified as the building for the formally homeless. What does (formally homeless) even means? Anyway, two weeks after the first group of the formally homeless moved into the building, we received a report that the neighbors saw a homeless person sleeping on the sidewalk across from Sunset Ridge. Could it be that the neighbors are concern about the safety of this person seen sleeping on the sidewalk or they are afraid that Sunset Ridge is about to invade their neighborhood with lazy and drug users? The story was concerning to me so, I decided to make some inquiries. Later that I found out after all the neighbors were right, but the good thing is that the person in question is not Sunset Ridge's resident.

Having spoken with tenants at Sunset Ridge and closely interacting with them daily, my colleague (Victoria Hofmo) and I realized that they do not fit the general description (lazy & drug users) of the homeless. The tenants at Sunset Ridge are the most wonderful people to be around, they are full of energy and smiles. They support each other and sometimes run errands for each other. Victoria has worked diligently to form a bond between the tenants and it is working very well. I look forward to coming to work every day because their smiles make my day always. I wish people would take the time to get to know the homeless, they will understand that stigmatizing them is unrealistic.

AUGUST MENU

2023

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| | 01 Chicken w/ Peach Sauce Egg Noodles Brussels Sprouts Steamed Cauliflower | 02 Vegetarian Chili White Rice (1/2 cup) California Blend Vegetables | 03 Beef Brisket w/ Tomatoes & Onions Pasta (1 cup) Roasted Mushrooms Sauteed Green Beans w/ Onions | 04 Baked Fish w/ Cream sauce Cous Cous Boiled Pumpkin Sauteed Spinach |
| 07 Italian Style Pork Loin California Blend vegetables Homemade Mashed Potatoes | 08 Beef Stroganoff w/ Noodles Sauteed Spinach Steamed Cauliflower | 09 Turkey Chili w/ Sweet Potatoes & Corn White Rice (1/2 cup) Sauteed Green Beans w/ Onions | 10 Spinach Mozzarella Quiche Baby Carrots w/ Parsley Brussels Sprouts | 11 Mango-licious Fish Orzo w/ Vegetables Roasted Broccoli |
| 14 Beef & Pepper Pasta Baby Carrots w/ Parsley Steamed Cauliflower | 15 BBQ Chicken Leg Quarters Braised Collard Greens Homemade Mashed Potatoes | 16 Baked Turkey Meatballs Tomato Sauce (pre-prepared 1/4 cup) Spaghetti (1/2 cup) Brussels Sprouts | 17 Three Bean Chili w/ Cheddar Cheese White Rice (1/2 cup) California Blend Vegetables | 18 Baked Flounder Cous cous Roasted Broccoli Sauteed Zucchini |
| 21 Apricot-Glazed Pork Chops Homemade Mashed Potatoes Oriental Blend Vegetables | 22 Chicken Stir Fry w/ Vegetables Yellow Rice & Pigeon Peas Steamed Carrots & Green Beans | 23 Beef Pot roast w/ Mushrooms Egg Noodles Sauteed Spinach | 24 Baked Macaroni & Cheese Steamed Broccoli Steamed Sliced Carrots | 25 Homemade Fish Cake Roasted Sweet Potato Fries Sauteed Zucchini |
| 28 Chicken Cacciatore Arroz con Gandules (Brown Rice w/ Pigeon Peas 1/2 cup) Oriental Blend Vegetables | 29 BBQ Pulled Pork Polenta Broccoli & Red Peppers | 30 Shepherd Pie w/ Beef & Turkey Roasted Zucchini Steamed Carrots | 31 Black Bean & Sweet Potato Chili White Rice (1/2 cup) Brussels Sprouts California Blend Vegetables | |

Every meal comes with a protein, grain, vegetable, fruit, juice, whole wheat bread and low fat milk.
Please contact Bay Ridge Center with any concerns 718-748-0650.
Menu is subject to change.

