

Chatterbox | December 2023

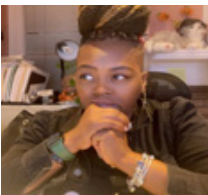
Do you believe in second chances?

A second chance or do-over is something we all have encountered at one point in our lives. It may have included restoring a relationship, changing colors, the timing wasn't right for something we wanted to do or you simply messed up. When the chance to do it again comes around, we tend to hold on to it and never take it for granted again. This unfortunately is something that many do not have the opportunity to experience and can only hope that one day their second chance will arrive like a knight in shining armor to deliver the great news. When I think of second chances the first thought that comes to mind is the Sunset Ridge HRA program that Bay Ridge Center has the pleasure of being a part of. This is a new scope of service for us as we have historically been a part of the fun side of aging services providing an array of activities in our senior center, NORC and HDML program. To be a true network of services we had to step outside of our comfort zone and join forces with NYC HRA/HUD service division with a key focus on homeless seniors and the challenges they face. Zaza Kandakai, Tenant Care Director, has the honor of helping the residents of Sunset Ridge age in place and become a part of the Bay Ridge Center family of members. Erasing the stigma is not always easy but must be done when you're under the umbrella of human and social services. Education is key and we are never too old to learn something new. As Zaza once said to me "their admiration and indebtedness to one another make Sunset Ridge habitable and it brings so much joy to all of us."

In this season of thankfulness, the Sunset Ridge residents are experiencing their lives through a new lens filled with gratitude and second chances. Never did they think they would find themselves displaced from their homes and becoming a part of the stigma attached with being homeless. They were once active members in their communities until life circumstances spiraled like a tornado leaving them without everything that they worked so hard for. As they take place in their newly constructed home designed to ensure they have all resources at their doorsteps they look to re-establish their sense of being and erase the stigma attached to being homeless.

Life has a way of reminding us to be thankful and grateful in the moment and take nothing for granted. Bay Ridge Center has been given a second chance to evaluate our mission driven by aging services and what it truly means to us. In 2023 we took that second chance and decided it was time to expand and upgrade our senior center, provide cultural meals on our home delivered meal routes, upgrade our kitchen and its equipment, expand our NORC programming in the community, partner with HRA and provide services for formerly homeless seniors, broaden our cultural diversity programming across the network and become better educated on human service needs in the aging population.

As this year of second chances comes to a close, I think it's fair to say we have plenty to be thankful for. I personally am thankful for the challenges placed before me and the will to get it all done for the sake of everyone who believes in what Bay Ridge Center stands for. It's a beautiful thing to see the fruits of your labor come to fruition. To the members of Bay Ridge Center across all programs, we thank you for choosing us to be your network of services. There once was a stigma surrounding getting older that has now become a faded memory. Aging services has redefined life after retirement, 2023 has proven that.



When life gives you lemons make orange juice and leave the world wondering how you did it (embrace it, spin it & make the most of it). Wishing everyone a peaceful, safe and fulling holiday season. Chat with you soon!

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

WORD FROM OUR SAC PRESIDENT

SONIA ADAMSKI, SENIOR ADVISORY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Dear Members,



At this time of the year, I am reminded of how much I have to be thankful for. I am not only thankful for my family, but also for my home away from home, our wonderful Center. I am thankful for the many interesting and light-hearted friends I have made, for our staff who works extremely hard to make our Center run so well, for our kitchen staff who cooks everyday with love, and to our wonderful volunteers who give of themselves for others.

On November 1 we had a ribbon cutting celebration at our new location. For me, it was the celebration of so many who supported in some way, the building of our new Center to receive their applause and have their recognition. Todd, we are so fortunate to have you on our team.

A special thank you to Skinflints for, as in so many previous years, remembering our seniors at Thanksgiving with a special Thanksgiving dinner. We know how much this is appreciated by so many from the response received each year.

Another thank you to Daniela, our kitchen staff, and our Indian friends at the Center for the lovely Diwali celebration. It is so nice to experience the culture of others, their food, dance, and customs. Padmini's storytelling was exceptional. A perfect way to spend an afternoon.

If you are a volunteer and have not received an invitation to the volunteer luncheon, or have not responded to my invitation, please call me at 718-833-3731 as soon as possible.

Our Holiday party is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Sirico's. The cost is \$60.00 per person, and you can invite guests at the same price. Make your reservation by December 5 by seeing Sonia at the Center or by calling 718-833-3731.

We hope to schedule our Holiday party at the Center on Tuesday, December 19. More to come on this.

Bingo night will resume the first Friday in April of 2024. I can hardly believe we will be three months into the year at that time.



Voting for Council members will take place on Friday morning, January 19, 2024, with the nomination sheet being posted on December 15, 2023. Job descriptions will be posted as well. Our Council consists of eleven members who are a very important part of our successful Center. Please consider becoming a Council member and/or being a part of our committees. If you have any questions, please see me. Your involvement is extremely important and greatly appreciated.

Warm wishes for a very happy holiday season.

IMPORTANT DATES

Hanukkah 12/7-12/15

Christmas 12/25

Kwanza 12/26.



GREETINGS FROM NORC

ASHLEY WITHERELL, NORC DIRECTOR

As the winter winds sweep through December, we find ourselves immersed in the magical aura of the holiday season. The cold air brings a sense of anticipation and joy, as we gather to celebrate the spirit of togetherness. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, let us embrace the warmth of our shared community and the joy that this festive season brings!

This month, we are delighted to highlight our 'Tai Chi' program with the incredible instructor Kim B. Join us in the gentle art of Tai Chi, where Kim gracefully guides our members through the ancient movements that promote balance, flexibility, and tranquility. It's not just an exercise; it's a journey towards holistic well-being. Discover the serenity within and join us on this path to mindfulness!

For those seeking a more artistic expression, come join us at our 'Bay Ridge Rocks' program with our talented instructor Eletra J. Unleash your creativity as you paint rocks that spread joy, and create beautiful connections within our members. Whether you want to keep the rock, or place it within the community to be found; it's a delightful way to express yourself while leaving a positive mark on the world around you!

Are you or someone you know looking to navigate the world of technology? Our 'Technology for Beginners' program, led by our dedicated case manager Sam S., is here to simplify the digital realm. From understanding the basics of smartphones to navigating computers, Sam provides patient guidance to ensure everyone can feel confident in the ever-evolving world of technology.

As we wrap up the year, let's celebrate the diverse range of programs that make our NNORC vibrant and engaging. Wishing you all a joyful December filled with warmth, laughter, and unforgettable moments.

'TIS THE SEASON



DANIELA BRETON, PROGRAM DIRECTOR



'Tis the season of joy and celebration! As the holiday season unfolds, we find ourselves immersed in the magic and warmth that Holidays brings. It's a time to gather, share kindness, and revel in the company of loved ones.

We're thrilled to announce some exciting events to make this season even more special:

1. **Trip to see "The Rockettes" on December 6th:** There are a few spots left so come and register to secure your spot for a delightful experience.
2. **Holiday Party on December 19th** Save the date for our Christmas party! Don't forget to invite your friends and make it an unforgettable holiday gathering!
3. **Toast on December 26th:** As we bid farewell to the holiday season, join us on December 26th for a heartfelt toast. More details will follow, so stay tuned for the perfect way to conclude the festivities.

We can't wait to share these joyous moments with you and create cherished memories together. Keep an eye open for further announcements and, most importantly, bring your festive spirit as we make this holiday season one to remember!

Wishing you warmth, happiness, and the magic of the season!



NEW MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

★ YURI OHARA

We are delighted to announce the joyous news regarding Yuri Ohara, a dedicated member of our NNORC community. Yuri has recently reached a significant milestone by successfully passing her citizenship test and officially attaining United States citizenship. Yuri's journey is a testament to her unwavering commitment and hard work, embodying the spirit of perseverance and dedication.

As a cherished member of our center, Yuri has not only enriched our community with her presence but has also exemplified the resilience and determination that fortify our NNORC family. On behalf of Bay Ridge Center and Bay Ridge Connects, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Yuri Ohara for this remarkable achievement. We are overjoyed to share in the celebration of this momentous occasion with her.

Yuri's success serves as a powerful testament to the strength of community and the indomitable power of individual determination. We applaud her accomplishments and look forward to witnessing the positive impact she continues to make within our NNORC community.



WHEN SHOULD WE BE THANKFUL?

ZAZA KANDAKAI, TENANT CARE DIRECTOR

Thanksgiving is that time of the year when families get together to share a meal and reflect on some happy moments. It might interest you that some people have so much to be thankful for whereas some are just thankful for where they lay their heads. As for the formally homeless residents at Sunset Ridge nearly every day is a day of thanksgiving. This has been expressed countless times through an act of gratitude. The saying goes, "It's not joy that makes us grateful but gratitude that makes us joyful." The expression of gratitude speaks volume of the gratefulness of the formally homeless tenants at Sunset Ridge. Also, their admiration and indebtedness to one another make Sunset Ridge habitable and it brings so much joy to all of us.

Part of what makes Sunset Ridge habitable are the fun times we have together. In October of this year a health awareness meeting was held at Sunset Ridge on the topic "Healthy Lifestyle." The moderators were nursing students from Saint Frances College, it was well attended and appreciated by our Seniors. Thanks to Catherine King and her team for putting this unique health awareness together. Halloween was another gathering that made a difference for the residents. They got together under the supervision of Victoria (Tenant Program Coordinator) to have fun. They played games, role played mummy by being wrapped with toilet papers, and shared past Halloween experiences with the group. As I listened to their stories I reflected on my own life and realized how fortunate I am. No matter how bad you think your situation is, there is somebody on the other side of town wishes to be in your position.

As the year comes to a close, we're earmarking programs that will involve increased participation of Sunset Ridge residents. Part of our goal is to keep the environment peaceful and allow our Seniors to live comfortably in their homes so they can age gracefully. I would like to thank the formally homeless tenants at Sunset Ridge for exhibiting an outstanding communal spirit. These tenants did not know each other prior to taking residency at Sunset Ridge, we worked hard to build a community of friendship and it materialized. Sunset Ridge will be the envy of Senior Housing because we're committed to promoting unity and peace among our Seniors.

EAT LESS SUGAR, YOU ARE SWEET ENOUGH

MARY ANN COUGHLIN, PT

Here it comes! The month of sugar! Cookies, candy, drinks. Can we resist those cookies as they come out of the oven or sit on the dessert table?

Sugar tastes sooo good but has some serious health risks. So much sugar is hidden in the foods we eat. It occurs naturally in foods that are carbohydrates such as fruits and vegetables, grains and dairy products. Even though these foods also have high amounts of fiber, essential minerals and antioxidants some of these foods are loaded with sugar. Other sweeteners such as honey and maple sugar, though unprocessed, can spike our insulin levels and lead to inflammation.

Added sugar is in many of our more obvious foods-soft drinks, flavored yogurts, cereals, cookies, cakes, candy and processed foods. But also think about soups, breads, cured meats and ketchup. High sugar intakes lead to an increase in blood pressure, inflammation, weight gain, diabetes and possibly heart disease and stroke. It puts a huge stress on our liver. For those of us who care-sugar decreases the elasticity in our skin making us prone to wrinkles. It's called glycation, excess blood sugar binds to the collagen in our skin. Remember, low fat doesn't mean low sugar and sugar free doesn't always mean no sugar.

Cutting back on sugar by decreasing the amount you normally put in your tea or coffee by half, reading labels, and having an awareness of what you are eating will help you in your journey to staying healthy. Here's some fun facts to keep your spirits up. Sugar was introduced in the West as a spice, not a sweetener, and sold to the wealthy along with saffron, ginger, cinnamon and such. It dates back to ancient times when people would chew on sugarcane to get the sweetness. It can also be used as preservative which may be why it is in our processed foods. Sugar can preserve color, texture and flavor as well as preventing spoilage. Lemons have more sugar than strawberries but the tartness masks the sweetness. Interestingly, we are born to crave sugar-it's in our DNA. Sigh!

Wishing you a healthy December!



EXERCISE OF THE MONTH

Standing, tap your right foot back behind you with a straight leg, return to center, then tap the left. If this easy for you then stretch your right arm forward as you tap your right leg back, left arm forward, left leg back. You can move slowly at first then try to pick up the pace. Music helps to keep the tempo.

Hold onto a sturdy chair, a counter top or bureau if your balance is off today. Gradually work up to 20 taps with each foot.

HAVE YOU EXERCISED TODAY?



DECEMBER MENU 2023

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | 01 Baked Fish Orzo w/ Vegetables Kale w/ tomato |
| 04 Breaded Pork Loin Baby Carrots w/ Parsley Homemade Mashed Potatoes Roasted Peppers | 05 Chicken w/ Peach Sauce Egg Noodles Brussels Sprouts Steamed Cauliflower | 06 Vegetarian Chili White Rice (1/2 cup) California Blend Vegetables | 07 Beef Brisket w/ Tomatoes & Onions Pasta (1 cup) Roasted Mushrooms Sauteed Green Beans w/ Onions | 08 Baked Fish w/ Cream sauce Cous Cous Boiled Pumpkin Sauteed Spinach |
| 11 Italian Style Pork Loin California Blend vegetables Homemade Mashed Potatoes | 12 Beef Stroganoff w/ Noodles Sauteed Spinach Steamed Cauliflower | 13 Turkey Chili w/ Sweet Potatoes & Corn White Rice (1/2 cup) Sauteed Green Beans w/ Onions | 14 Spinach Mozzarella Quiche Baby Carrots w/ Parsley Brussels Sprouts | 15 Mango-licious Fish Orzo w/ Vegetables Roasted Broccoli |
| 18 Beef & Pepper Pasta Baby Carrots w/ Parsley Steamed Cauliflower | 19 BBQ Chicken Leg Quarters Braised Collard Greens Homemade Mashed Potatoes | 20 Baked Turkey Meatballs Tomato Sauce (pre- prepared 1/4 cup) Spaghetti (1/2 cup) Brussels Sprouts | 21 Three Bean Chili w/ Cheddar Cheese White Rice (1/2 cup) California Blend Vegetables | 22 Baked Flounder Cous cous Roasted Broccoli Sauteed Zucchini |
| 25 CENTER CLOSED | 26 Chicken Stir Fry w/ Vegetables Yellow Rice & Pigeon Peas Steamed Carrots & Green Beans | 27 Beef Pot roast w/ Mushrooms Egg Noodles Sauteed Spinach | 28 Baked Macaroni & Cheese Steamed Broccoli Steamed Sliced Carrots | 29 Homemade Fish Cake Roasted Sweet Potato Fries Sauteed Zucchini |

**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.**