

## DEAR FRIENDS,

As we embark on the month of February, Bay Ridge Center is honored to join the nation in celebrating Black History Month. This annual observance is a time to reflect, appreciate, and pay tribute to the remarkable contributions and achievements of African Americans throughout history.

This Black History Month, we take a moment to recognize the rich tapestry of African American culture that has woven itself into the fabric of our nation. It is a time to honor the trailblazers, visionaries, and unsung heroes who have shaped history, broken barriers, and inspired generations.

At Bay Ridge Center we believe in the power of diversity and inclusion. Black History Month provides us with an opportunity to amplify voices, share stories, and foster a greater understanding of the African American experience. Together, we celebrate the resilience, strength, and achievements that have enriched our society.

Throughout this month, we have planned a series of events, discussions, and activities that shine a spotlight on the significant contributions of African Americans in various professions – from arts and sciences to politics and beyond. Stay tuned for engaging content that educates, uplifts, and encourages dialogue within our community.

Let us come together to learn, appreciate, and build bridges of understanding.

Thank you for being a valued member of our community. Together, let's make this Black History Month a time of reflection, education, and celebration.

Sincerely,

**Amed Alfaraji**

Director of Community Outreach & Strategic Planning

**I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.**



# BAY RIDGE CONNECTS

ASHLEY WITHERELL, NORC DIRECTOR

## Dear Bay Ridge Connects Community,

As we step into the month of February, love is in the air, and I am thrilled to share the latest updates from our NNORC. But before that, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to all of you. Your energy, kindness, and commitment to creating a supportive community here at Bay Ridge Connects makes my role as the NNORC Director incredibly rewarding. Your participation and enthusiasm continue to make Bay Ridge Connects a truly special place. Thank you for being the heart of our community!



### Program Highlights:

**Bay Ridge Rocks:** Join us at our 'Bay Ridge Rocks' class every other Wednesday at 2pm for a fun and relaxing rock painting session with talented instructor Eletra J. Let your imagination run wild as you transform ordinary rocks into colorful works of art.



### Mixed Media and Collage:

Join us every Thursday at 11am for our 'Mixed Media and Collage' class with instructor Kristin R. Explore different techniques, textures, and materials to create unique pieces of art.

XOXO

Don't miss out on these exciting opportunities to connect, create, and share moments with fellow members of our Bay Ridge Connects community. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and classes; here's to a February filled with love and creativity!

## PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT

DANIELA BRETON, PROGRAM DIRECTOR



February is a special month dedicated to expressing love to your partner, friends, and family.

**Valentine's Day Extravaganza:** Join us for an unforgettable Valentine's Day celebration! Experience a lively party with a fantastic DJ, indulge in special foods that will delight your taste buds, exchange heartfelt gifts, and try your luck in exciting raffles. Love is in the air!

**Chinese New Year Festivities:** Embrace the cultural richness of Chinese New Year with us. Enjoy a special event filled with captivating performances, and savor a menu specially crafted for this joyful occasion. Join in the celebrations and get into the festive spirit!

**February Birthday Party:** Let's celebrate the birthdays of our February stars! Come together for a joyful birthday party, complete with delicious cakes, festive decorations, and a lot of laughter. It's a month-long celebration of life and love!

**Join us throughout February for a harmonious blend of love, cultural experiences, and joyful birthday festivities!**

# HEART HARMONY: A MELODY OF WELLNESS OF OUR GOLDEN YEARS

FIONA HO, HEALTH AND WELLNESS COORDINATOR

As we age, the importance of maintaining heart health becomes increasingly vital. Heart disease remains a leading cause of mortality but the good news is that adopting a balanced approach to nutrition and physical activity can significantly reduce the risk. Here are some tips on keeping a happy healthy heart.

## Heart-Healthy Eating:

**Choose Nutrient-Rich Foods:** Incorporate a diet rich in fruits and vegetables with a wide variety of proteins

**Limit Fats:** Cut down on foods high in trans fats such as fried foods & processed snacks

**Prioritize Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Include sources of omega-3 fatty acids in your diet, such as fatty fish like salmon and mackerel

**Control Sugar Intake:** Reduce your sugar intake by avoiding desserts, sugary snacks and drinks

## Physical Activity for a Healthy Heart:

**Regular Cardiovascular Exercise:** Engage in aerobic activities like walking and cycling or participate in group fitness classes for at least 150 minutes per week

**Strength Training:** Incorporate strength training exercises at least twice a week into your routine

**Flexibility and Balance Exercises:** Include activities like yoga or tai chi to improve flexibility & balance

**Consistency is Key:** Aim for regular, consistent physical activity

In the pursuit of a heart-healthy lifestyle, the combination of nutritious eating and regular physical activity is a powerful strategy. Small, sustainable changes to your daily routine can have a profound impact on your cardiovascular health. Embrace a balanced diet, stay active, and prioritize your heart health for a longer, more vibrant life.



## A WORD FROM YOUR COUNCIL

SONIA ADAMSKI, SENIOR ADVISORY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays and is looking forward to the new year. Here, we at the Bay Ridge Center, have been waiting too long for our new location to welcome us, and the new members waiting in the wings. I expect it will be very exciting when that day is finally here.

As we all know by now, unfortunately and with disappointment, our Senior Advisory Council election scheduled for January 19 was postponed. Normally, in the January Chatterbox I would be reporting to you the newly elected Council members and a report of the Annual Meeting.

Please let me explain that the Senior Advisory Council (SAC) represents you, the members. So, when you hear that SAC did this or did that, it is the members who are the stars. This year we supported our Center in the following ways.

- 1. SAC planned monthly birthday/theme parties each month for the members.**
- 2. SAC arranged two trips each month for the members.**
- 3. SAC hosted a Volunteer luncheon at Vesuvio's on December 7 for 27 Center volunteers in the amount of \$1179.00.**
- 4. SAC hosted a Holiday Party on December 12 at Sirico's for 90 members and guests. Music paid for by SAC.**
- 5. SAC hosted Friday night bingo for members and friends from April - November 2023 raising \$2,642.00 for our Center.**
- 6. SAC hosted a fundraiser at Sirico's for the Center on August 12 with 80 attendees, raising \$2,000.00 for our Center.**
- 7. SAC donated \$1,000.00 to the Center for the rental of a coach bus to see the Christmas Spectacular at Radio City.**

I would like to thank, and ask for your continued support of our Center, for without you this could never happen. **With many thanks, Sonia Adamski Senior Advisory Council President**

# THESE PEOPLE ARE MY FAMILY

VICTORIA HOFMO, TENANT ACTIVITY COORDINATOR

I have had a long history with the Bay Ridge Center. When I was a teen, I remember helping Pastor Helmers (he was the visionary who created the Center) carry frozen turkeys up the steep back stairway by the offices, for distribution. Later, Cheryl Heiberg the Executive Director of the Center at the time, (we were students at L.E.S. together) asked me to work at a Homebound Senior Program they sponsored at the Marien-Heim on 46th Street. More recently, when Covid struck, I volunteered with Pastor Knudsen and 3 other women to assist in packing and getting out the meals on wheels. So, the BRC has held a long and lasting place in my heart and life.

It's great to be back now, working part time with Zaza at Sunset Ridge: the new Senior Housing building on 63rd Street and 4th Avenue. About 1/3rd of the population is formerly homeless and these are the people we work with under the auspices of the BRC. We are there to support them in transitioning in their new residences and for many, their new neighborhood, so they remain in their homes and not return to the shelter system.

Having a roof over your head is an essential need for all of us. It fills not only a physical need for comfort, warmth and shelter from precipitation, it also fills a physiological and emotional need for stability, safety and security. Many of our residents came from a secure place and lost their homes during the Pandemic. Unable to find affordable housing they had no choice but to turn to the shelter system. Others have had different struggles. At Sunset Ridge no matter what they have formerly encountered they have found the stability, safety and security every human deserves.

But I hope they have also found something else - community. That is really my focus. Of course, I assist in giving them info about where to shop, the local transportation system and with the most asked question - Can you help me put money onto my laundry card?

Once a month we have a Coffee & Conversation gathering. The residents have really bonded and look out for each other, checking on those who are ill or just sharing food they prepared. It is also a safe space where any topic can be discussed or problems mulled over.

Because they do not live in a silo, we also have events where everyone in the building is invited. We wish to encourage cohesion within the entire complex. In December we had a Holiday Party with all. It was a joy. The tree was lit and decorations hung. People brought side dishes, desserts, etc. (We are fortunate to have 4 chefs in the building), music and best of all dancing. I have given special names to our dancers - Twinkle Toes, Salsa Hips, Running Man and the Polish Fred Astaire.

Perhaps the most wonderful part of my job is when I hear the residents say, "I love living here."  
"These people are my family."

## NOTABLE DATES

**Black History Month**

**National Groundhog Day 2/2**

**World Cancer Day 2/4**

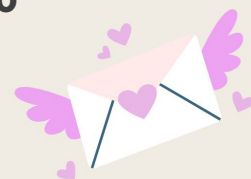
**Chinese New Year 2/10**

**Valentine's Day 2/14**

**Random Acts of Kindness Week 2/14 - 2/20**

**Ash Wednesday 2/17**

**Presidents Day 2/19**



**Leap Year 29 days in February which happens every 4 years.**

# CELEBRATING LOVE AND COMMUNITY:

## EMBRACING VALENTINE'S DAY WITH PURPOSE AT THE BAY RIDGE CENTER FOR OLDER ADULTS

As February unfolds, our hearts are filled with the spirit of love and connection, marking the arrival of Valentine's Day. At the Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults, where fostering community support of our older adults who are at the core of our mission, as this special day takes on a unique significance. Let us explore the multifaceted ways in which Valentine's Day can be a celebration of love, compassion, and community for our beloved older adults.

Valentine's Day, traditionally associated with romantic gestures, holds a deeper meaning at the Bay Ridge Center. It is an occasion to honor the rich tapestry of relationships and connections that thrive within our community of older adults. In the spirit of our nonprofit's commitment to enhancing the lives of older adults, let us use this day to highlight the importance of companionship, friendship, and the enduring bonds that make our center a warm and welcoming space for all.

Saint Valentine, known for acts of compassion and selflessness, inspires us to extend love not only to our partners but also to our friends, family, and the larger community. This sentiment resonates strongly within the Bay Ridge Center, where a sense of belonging and support is fostered among our older adults. This Valentine's Day, let us celebrate the love that flourishes within our community by organizing special events, activities, and social gatherings that bring joy and connection to the lives of our members.

In the true spirit of philanthropy, our center encourages acts of service that make a positive impact on the lives of older adults. Volunteers can contribute their time and skills to organize activities, provide companionship, or assist with daily tasks, creating a sense of shared responsibility and love within our community.

Moreover, at the Bay Ridge Center, we understand the importance of creating an environment that nurtures not only human connections but also a sustainable and compassionate world. This Valentine's Day, let us promote eco-friendly practices and engage in activities that contribute to the well-being of our planet, reflecting our commitment to a holistic approach to love and care.

As a hub for older adults, our organization recognizes the power of community and the positive impact it can have on the well-being of our members. This Valentine's Day, we invite everyone to join us in celebrating love in all its forms – love for our fellow seniors, love for the community, and love for the connections that make the Bay Ridge Center a second home for many.

Valentine's Day at the Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults is a celebration of the enduring bonds and connections that make our community thrive. As we embrace this day with purpose, let us reflect on the ways we can contribute to a more compassionate and connected world for our beloved seniors. Together, we can make Valentine's Day a symbol of love that transcends generations and creates a lasting impact on the lives of those within the Bay Ridge Center.







# FEBRUARY MENU 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>
			Three Bean Chili w/ Cheddar Cheese White Rice (1/2 cup) California Blend Vegetables	Baked Flounder Cous cous Roasted Broccoli Sauteed Zucchini
<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>09</b>
Apricot-Glazed Pork Chops Homemade Mashed Potatoes Oriental Blend Vegetables	Chicken Stir Fry w/ Vegetables Yellow Rice & Pigeon Peas Steamed Carrots & Green Beans	Beef Pot roast w/ Mushrooms Egg Noodles Sauteed Spinach	Baked Macaroni & Cheese Steamed Broccoli Steamed Sliced Carrots	Homemade Fish Cake Roasted Sweet Potato Fries Sauteed Zucchini
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
Chicken Cacciatore Arroz con Gandules (Brown Rice w/ Pigeon Peas 1/2 cup) Oriental Blend Vegetables	BBQ Pulled Pork Polenta Broccoli & Red Peppers	Shepherd Pie w/ Beef & Turkey Roasted Zucchini Steamed Carrots	Black Bean & Sweet Potato Chili White Rice (1/2 cup) Brussels Sprouts California Blend Vegetables	Baked Fish Orzo w/ Vegetables Baby Carrots w/ Parsley
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
CENTER CLOSED	Pork Stir Fry w/ Vegetables Egg Noodles California Blend Vegetables Roasted Peppers	Homemade Hamburger Baked Onions Corn & Red Peppers Roasted Sweet Potato Fries	Baked Ziti w/ Cheese Baby Carrots w/ Parsley Brussels Sprouts	Baked Fish Orzo w/ Vegetables Kale w/ Tomato
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	
Breaded Pork Loin Baby Carrots w/ Parsley Homemade Mashed Potatoes Roasted Peppers	Chicken w/ Peach Sauce Egg Noodles Brussels Sprouts Steamed Cauliflower	Vegetarian Chili White Rice (1/2 cup) California Blend Vegetables	Beef Brisket w/ Tomatoes & Onions Pasta (1 cup) Roasted Mushrooms Sauteed Green Beans w/ Onions	

**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.**