

Our Voice

Spring 2026



Welcome to the Naperville Senior Task Force's (STF) quarterly newsletter: *Our Voice*. The STF enhances quality of life for Naperville seniors through supportive independent living, promotion of their health and well-being, education opportunities and recognition of their self-worth and community belonging. Please visit naperville.il.us/seniortaskforce for information and updates, and follow us on [Facebook](#). Thank you!



Gardening at Any Age: A Guide for Seniors

By Gwenn Lloyd

Senior Task Force member

Spring is in the air and that means getting outside more. There's something satisfying about putting your hands in soil. Gardening is a hobby that always gives something back — sometimes more than others.

For many older adults, it becomes less about the perfect flowers and more about enjoying communing with nature and being outdoors. Many seniors say gardening helps them feel a sense of purpose. Fresh air can lift your mood, and watching something grow just makes you feel content.

However, bodies change with time and this invites some gardening changes as well. A few thoughtful adjustments can make the experience more comfortable and keep gardening feeling fun and not like a chore. For example:

- Raised beds bring the garden up to a height that's easier on the back and knees.
- Lightweight, ergonomic tools reduce strain on hands and wrists.
- Sturdy seating or kneelers offer support during longer sessions.
- Shorter sessions help prevent fatigue while keeping the hobby enjoyable.
- Wide, reliable pathways make moving around the garden safer and more relaxed.

There's no single "right" way to garden, especially for seniors. The best approach is the one that fits your daily life. Several options can help keep gardening manageable without losing any of the joy.

- Container gardening works on patios, balconies or even a windowsill.
- Vertical gardens reduce bending and still provide views of greenery.
- Native plants can take less effort and reward you with steady, dependable growth.

Consider how much care some plants need when you design. Herbs like basil, mint and chives grow nicely in small spaces. Perennials such as coneflowers or hostas return year after year with little work — if the bunnies don't eat them! Dwarf tomatoes, lettuce mixes and strawberries are great for containers and offer the added benefit of being edible.

Here are a few safety reminders to keep gardening enjoyable:

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and light layers to protect from the sun.
- Keep water nearby (for you and the plants) and take frequent breaks.
- Choose times of day when the sun is milder.
- Use gloves to protect skin and improve your grip.
- Make sure tools and pathways are easy to maneuver.

Gardening can also be social. Many seniors enjoy joining local garden clubs, visiting community gardens or sharing cuttings and homegrown produce with neighbors. Gardening doesn't have to be strenuous or complicated to be meaningful. Making a few thoughtful adjustments will allow gardening to be a source of purpose and joy at any age.



Silver CPR Scheduled for May 19

Calling Naperville seniors age 50+. It's time for the next quarterly session of the Senior Task Force's Silver CPR class. **Classes are free** and taught by a Naperville Fire Department paramedic. Attendees learn about the lifesaving skills of basic CPR while practicing on mannequins, as well as the use of an automatic external defibrillator and choking intervention.

The next classes are scheduled for 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, at the A. George and Patricia Pradel Safety Town of Naperville, 1320 Aurora Ave. Space is limited to 30 participants per class. Additional training options will also be available later this year on Wednesday, Sept. 16, and Tuesday, Nov. 10.

To register for May, click the link for the class that works best for your schedule:

[May 19 a.m. Registration](#)

[May 19 p.m. Registration](#)

For more information, email silvercpr2026@gmail.com.



Practice Situational Awareness to Stay Safe

Situational awareness is being attentive to surroundings to reduce risks and enhance personal safety. While it may sound simple, distractions and fast-paced routines make it challenging. Practicing this skill helps prevent crime, avoid accidents and helps you stay prepared.

Key Tips for Situational Awareness:

- **Predict events.** Anticipate future actions based on what's happening around you. Thinking ahead improves decision-making.
- **Identify elements.** Notice not only potential threats, but also ordinary factors like people, objects and environmental changes.
- **Keep your head up.** Avoid being absorbed by phones or other devices, which limit awareness of surroundings.
- **Use peripheral vision.** Train yourself to monitor activity outside your central focus for a wider sense of awareness.
- **Don't just look — see.** Observe exits, unusual objects or suspicious behavior when entering a room or public space.

- **Avoid overload.** Too many tasks or distractions cause errors and stress; prioritize and minimize distractions.
- **Prevent fatigue.** Rest well and maintain energy levels since tiredness diminishes vigilance.
- **Clear your mind.** Confusion causes missed signals and mistakes while boosting a potential threat's confidence.
- **Guard against complacency.** Staying in a comfort zone or assuming everything is fine lowers alertness. Periodically check your mindset.
- **Engage your senses.** Use sight, hearing, smell and touch to detect changes in your environment.
- **Trust instincts.** If a situation feels wrong, remove yourself, ask for help or call 911.
- **Reassess continually.** Environments change quickly; ongoing evaluation helps you respond effectively.

Ultimately, practicing situational awareness is about staying alert, attentive and engaged, both mentally and physically. Doing so can help avoid dangerous encounters, prevent accidents and recognize criminal behavior before it occurs.

(Information courtesy of the Naperville Police Department's "A Safer Naper" campaign.)



Keeping an Eye on Neighborhoods: Paws on Patrol

Paws on Patrol is a community dog walker watch program that encourages residents to serve as extra eyes and ears while out walking their dogs, and to notify 9-1-1 of suspicious activity.

The program enhances the partnership between police and the community by offering resources on how to recognize, observe and report suspicious behavior effectively. When you call to report suspicious activity, you not only aid the Naperville Police Department, but you also make your neighborhood a safer place to live.



A Dog Walker Watch Program

Make your neighborhood safer by learning how to effectively observe and report suspicious activity while out on your daily walks. Whether you have a canine companion or not, you can still learn valuable skills to identify and report suspicious activity during your daily walks!

No registration is necessary. Welcome packets with program details and some special giveaways can be picked up at the Naperville Police Department, 1350 Aurora Ave., or at Naperville Animal Control, 1340 Aurora Ave., through April.

Visit www.naperville.il.us/ASaferNaper to download a Paws on Patrol brochure and for more information on our A Safer Naper topic of burglary prevention.

(Information courtesy of the Naperville Police Department's "A Safer Naper" campaign.)



The Constructive Corner: Things To Do, Discover and Digest

City of Naperville Public Libraries — for a full listing of events go to: www.naperville-lib.org.

Lotería at the Library

7 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, April 30
Program Room, Naper Blvd. Library

Join us for some lively rounds of this traditional Latin American Bingo-like game. Using a tabla (board) with pictures instead of numbers, the first player to get four-in-a row shouts "Lotería!" for a prize. No registration is required, but space is limited to the first 20 participants.

Trivia Night

6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6
Meeting Room A/B, 95th Street Library

Put your trivia skills to the test in an exciting night of fun and knowledge! Join us as we challenge you with questions across a wide range of topics. You can compete individually or as part of a team. **No registration is required, but space is limited to the first 75 participants.**

A Traditional Chinese Tea Demonstration

2 to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 9
Program Room, Naper Blvd. Library

In honor of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, presenter Yvonne Wolf will demonstrate a traditional Chinese tea service. This engaging program explores the origins of tea, its role in East Asian social customs and its many benefits. Participants will experience traditional tea handling, identify essential tea ware, and learn proper steeping techniques. Two teas, including one noncaffeinated option, will be served. No registration is required but space is limited to the first 35 participants.

Crafternoon: Dried Blooms on Canvas

1 to 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 14
Meeting Room A, 95th Street Library
Also occurs on 5/19 (Nichols Library) and 5/27 (Naper Boulevard Library)

Bring the beauty of everlasting blooms into your home. Create a one-of-a-kind dried flower arrangement to enjoy all year long. No registration is required, but space is limited to the first 30 participants.

An Exploration of Jewish Mediterranean Cuisine

2 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 17
Program Room, Naper Blvd. Library

In honor of Jewish American Heritage Month, join cookbook author and culinary educator Emily Paster for a delicious journey through the rich culinary traditions of Jewish communities from the Mediterranean and Middle East. Discover vibrant flavors and time-honored dishes such as flaky bourekas, herb-filled rice or cheese pies and fragrant rosewater-scented pastries. Samples will be available for the first 30 participants.

Death-Defying Acts: The History of the Circus

1 to 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 21
Meeting Room A/B, 95th Street Library

Barnum may be the biggest name under the big top, but he was only a small part of the circus story. Join William Pack for a whirlwind journey through circus history, from Philip Astley's creation of the modern circus in 1786, to Dan Rice, "the most famous man you've never heard of," and the legendary rivalry between Barnum and the Ringling Brothers. Hear the stories of triumph, disaster and life on the road of those who gave their lives to the show and became legends in the process.

Naper Settlement

For questions or more information, please call 630.420.6010 or email nsguestservices@naperville.il.us.

Golden Days — Free Programs for Adults 55+

Adults 55+ are invited to Naper Settlement's new free Golden Days programs. Whether you're eager to express your creativity with guided painting and crafts, explore nature with the DuPage Birding Club, find your Zen with chair yoga or enjoy an engaging walking play — there's something exciting for everyone to connect and learn together! Go to the website for full listings.

Additional offerings at Naper Settlement:

Community Conversations: Experience the joy of shared conversation, learning and connection with these free facilitated discussions on U.S. history. Join us for a series of conversations that explore the founding of the United States through the lens of local

history. Experience the joy of shared conversation, learning and connection around primary documents and artifacts including the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution and more.

Northwest Ordinance

3:30 to 5 p.m. on April 30. Free with snacks included. [Visit the registration portal to register for the April 30 program.](#)

Thomas Hutchins's Map

1:30 to 3 p.m. on May 16. Free with snacks included. [Visit the registration portal to register for the May 16 program.](#)

Naperville Walking Tours

Tours last approximately 60 minutes and cover about 2 miles. Pre-registration is required. Ticket sales end at 4 p.m. on each tour date. Tickets cannot be purchased at the door. Unless otherwise noted, tours will meet at 523 S. Webster St. Tours will step off on time, so please arrive with enough time to park and check-in ahead of tour time. Guests are encouraged to dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes. Open to all ages.

Naperville Architecture Walking Tour

5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on May 14 or June 11. \$15/person. All ages.

Learn about the important and interesting architecture from the 1800s to today that makes Downtown Naperville a beautiful place to live, work and play. [Visit the registration portal to register for the May 14 tour.](#) [Visit the registration portal to register for the June 11 tour.](#)

Naperville Cemetery Walking Tour

5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on April 30 or June 25. \$15/person. All ages.

As you stroll through the serenity of this final resting place, you will step back into the past to learn the stories of pioneers, trailblazers and everyday heroes who once breathed life into the very streets you walk today. [Visit the registration portal to register for the April 30 tour.](#) [Visit the registration portal to register for the June 25 tour.](#)

Origins of Naperville Walking Tour

5:30 - 6:30 p.m. on May 28. \$15/person. All ages.

Listen to stories from Naperville's founding to the generosity of Caroline Martin Mitchell on a walking tour of the west side of Downtown Naperville. [Visit the registration portal to register for the May 28 tour.](#)

Your Friendly Neighborhood Historian Lectures

Dive into history like never before with a candid conversation on historical events with Dr. Andrea Field, Naper Settlement's Curator of History, and visiting local historians. This engaging and entertaining series provides a unique perspective and research on historical events and topics that aren't often covered in the classroom.

The Great Depression

7 to 8 p.m. on May 21. \$10/lecture/person. Ages 14+. [Visit the registration portal to register for the Great Depression program on May 21.](#)

Books for Seniors

"Little Fires Everywhere," by Celeste Ng. A compelling narrative about a suburban community, this book dives into themes of identity, family and the secrets people keep.

"The Left Hand of Darkness," by Ursula K. Le Guin. A groundbreaking novel that explores themes of gender and society on a distant planet where the inhabitants can change their sex.

"Into the Wild," by Jon Krakauer. The true story of Chris McCandless, who ventured into the Alaskan wilderness in search of a deeper meaning to life and ultimately met a tragic end.



Scam Alert: Expired Subscription Notifications

You've likely heard warnings of scams directed to you through your phone. Expired subscription texts fool targets into thinking their subscriptions have expired. Clicking on the provided link activates the scam.

But what does one of these messages actually look like? Below is an example from Norton™ Antivirus. One giveaway here is the fact that streaming services usually notify you of failed payments via email, not text.





Why America's Healthcare System Fails Older Adults

By Gwenn Lloyd

Senior Task Force Member

In an article by freelance personal finance writer and editor Richard Eisenberg titled “Why Doesn't America's Healthcare System Work for Older People?” (*MarketWatch*, 10/12/24), he points out that “things are not looking good” regarding healthcare and health costs. To support his conclusion, he summarizes the results of two surveys: “Meeting the Growing Demand for Age-Friendly Care: Health Care at the Crossroads,” from the Age Wave consulting firm and the John A. Hartford Foundation, and The Commonwealth Fund's “Mirror, Mirror 2024: A Portrait of the Failing U.S. Health System.”

Eisenberg notes that when Age Wave and the John A. Hartford Foundation, a group working to improve healthcare for older Americans, asked the Harris Poll to survey roughly 2,500 adults ages 65 and older, some of the findings were:

- Just 11% give the nation's healthcare system an “A” grade.
- 16% give an A to their satisfaction with out-of-pocket health costs. The average Medicare beneficiary spends \$7,000 on out-of-pocket healthcare costs annually, not including long-term care.
- 56% call navigating the U.S. healthcare system “difficult and stressful.”
- Older women are less satisfied with the healthcare system than older men.

These findings are crucial to establishing age friendly programs and support functions. Eisenberg writes that, according to Terry Fulmer, president of the John A. Hartford Foundation, 70, and formerly a nurse in geriatrics, many older Americans are unhappy with the U.S. healthcare system because it is often not age friendly. Age-friendly healthcare, she says, means focusing on what her foundation calls the “4 M's”: what *matters* to older adults, their *medications*, *mentation* (mental activity – preventing, identifying and treating dementia, depression and delirium), and *mobility*. Most older Americans don't feel doctors and other health practitioners listen to them, Fulmer added.

These lessons are essential for an age friendly focus for older Americans. Eisenberg writes that one explanation for the lack of age-friendly care is that doctors usually don't have much time to talk with patients during appointments. According to Fulmer, doctors know they've got eight to 10 minutes and “they're looking at a checklist in order to get paid.” Also, our healthcare system generally lacks coordinated healthcare for people 65

and older, the Age Wave/John A. Hartford Foundation report said. Eisenberg points out that more than half of Medicare beneficiaries see more than three physicians a year and 30% see five or more.

An important recommendation from Eisenberg resulted from suggestions by Reginald Williams, the Commonwealth Fund's vice president for international health policy and practice innovations, and Fulmer. According to Eisenberg, they think that older patients need to be more proactive to receive age-friendly care. "Really understand your health benefits," advises Williams. "That could be done by engaging with a patient navigator, a social worker or a family friend." Says Fulmer: "Go in and ask for the 4 Ms yourself. That will really help you. You should demand age-friendly care because you deserve age-friendly care."

Naperville Senior Task Force's 2026 Senior of the Year Award



Nominations open
July - August 2026

Awards presented
October 2026

Every year, the Senior Task Force accepts nominations for the Senior of the Year Award.

The award honors one man and one woman, for their community service.

Nominees must be 65 or older and a Naperville resident.

Nominees should have a history of community service and giving back selflessly.

NOMINATION FORMS AT:
naperville.il.us/seniortaskforce

CONTACT NSTF:
napervilleseniortaskforce@gmail.com

The Naperville Senior Task Force

Taught by a Naperville
Firefighter Paramedic

2026

Classes at Safety Town
1320 Aurora Ave,
Naperville

Silver CPR Training

Free for
seniors 50+

10 am
or
12:30 pm

May 19 / September 16 / November 10

More info: silvercpr2026@gmail.com

Our Voice Newsletter Sign-up

Sign up for the STF *Our Voice* quarterly newsletter by registering for the City's eNews at naperville.il.us/enews. Don't forget to check the "Senior Newsletter: Our Voice" box!

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