

Our Voice

Summer 2025



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!

Wanted: Senior of the Year Nominations

The Senior Task Force is seeking nominations for the Senior of the Year Award. The award honors two seniors, one man and one woman, for their community service. Nominees must be 65 or older and live in Naperville, with a history of community service and giving back selflessly as a volunteer.

Nomination forms are available on the City website, www.naperville.il.us/seniortaskforce, and will be accepted through August. Senior of the Year Awards will be presented at the Oct. 7 City Council Meeting.



Silver CPR Sessions Offered in September

Have you taken advantage of one of the best free educational programs offered to Naperville seniors?

The Naperville Senior Task Force and the Naperville Fire Department in September will host the third annual installment of courses covering the lifesaving skills of basic CPR, the use of an automatic external defibrillator, and choking intervention.

Silver CPR **classes are free** to participants and taught in a relaxed setting by Naperville Fire Department paramedics. Classes are scheduled for 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at the A. George and Patricia Pradel Safety Town of Naperville, 1320 Aurora Ave. Space is limited to 25 participants per class.

To register, click on the link below for the class you wish to attend.

[10 a.m. on Sept. 9](#)

[12:30 p.m. on Sept. 9](#)

Once registered, please enter the event into your personal calendar and cancel if you are unable to attend, as demand is high for this program and there are others waiting to take the course.

For more information, send an email message to: silvercpr2025@gmail.com.



Seniors and Public Transportation: Stepping Out of the Comfort Zone

Public transportation is crucial for many seniors, as it helps maintain an independent lifestyle when driving becomes more difficult or impossible. It allows seniors to get to appointments, run errands, and engage in social activities with loved ones, friends, and the community at large. Yet for many seniors, taking public transportation can be a source of fear. Understanding the reasons behind the fear and adopting some useful tips can go a long way towards building confidence.

There are many reasons why seniors may worry about using public transportation. Just the thought of using an app, digital passes, and online route planning can be intimidating to those who are unfamiliar with the technology. A fear of falling or getting hurt can be worrisome for those who have balance issues, as buses can stop suddenly or require quick movement to find a seat. And confusion over routes and schedules can be daunting, especially for those with vision problems or cognitive challenges such as memory loss. Other concerns might include a fear of being targeted for theft or harassment or simply a fear of trying something new. Many seniors have had their own transportation for many years and perhaps have never taken shared transportation, such as a bus, Uber or paratransit services.

Unfortunately, when seniors avoid public transportation due to fear, they risk becoming isolated or dependent on others. Isolation can lead to missed medical appointments, decreased physical activity, reduced social interaction and reduced independence. All of these can affect the mental health and well-being of seniors. To build confidence in this area, consider the following tips:

- Take a first trip (or as many as needed to feel comfortable) with a buddy. Enlisting help from the transportation company with route planning can be beneficial, as well.
- When you are ready to travel solo, start with a short, familiar route, such as to the grocery store. The more you ride the same route, the more familiar and comfortable it will become. Avoid peak hours so there are fewer crowds.
- Have a friend or family member help you set up a transportation app or navigate through a website and explain exactly how it is used. (Teenagers are often a great help with this!) Even though technology can at times be intimidating and feel overwhelming, it can also be marvelously helpful.
- Choose senior-friendly services such as shuttles, paratransit services and ride-assist programs like Naperville's Ride Assist Naperville (RAN) service to help ease anxiety. Lyft also offers a specialized program called Lyft Silver, designed to simplify ride share for seniors.
- Review personal safety tips, such as sitting close to the driver or in designated priority seating, traveling during daylight hours, and keeping belongings close or out of sight when possible. Carry a cell phone with you for emergencies, navigation, or to contact friends and family.

Overcoming fear of public transportation requires creating a safe, supportive and manageable experience. With proper preparation, guidance and practice, many seniors will become comfortable with taking public transportation, increasing freedom and independence in the process.

New Nonprofit Provides Funding for Senior Services

Naperville Seniors is a new nonprofit organization ready to enhance the health and well-being of seniors in Naperville! The organization was started in 2024 with a mission to support and promote programs for seniors. Naperville Seniors grew out of the Senior Task Force, working closely with STF to fund its many initiatives.

STF continues to expand its community programs. Its offerings now include:

- The Memory Café, a social gathering place where people living with dementia and their care partners can come for stimulating activities and social kinship, now meets twice each month. The group provides cognitive stimulation, social engagement, and a safe and accepting environment for those living with dementia and their caregivers.
- Dementia caregivers support groups (a second one was recently added). These groups offer caregivers respite and fellowship, along with support and resources to help in their journey of caregiving, which often leaves people feeling overwhelmed. Support groups provide emotional support, practical advice, and help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- Silver CPR, a special program designed for seniors to learn life-saving techniques.
- The Dementia Friendly Community Education Program, which provides training to local businesses and organizations in supporting customers and patrons who are living with dementia. Having access to dementia-friendly businesses and organizations allows those living with dementia to be supported and accepted as they continue to access services they've always used and promotes community inclusion.

All of these initiatives are offered free to seniors and their caregivers. More funding is needed to allow these essential and worthwhile programs to expand. Naperville Seniors sees what is needed in the community, helps to identify gaps in services or programs, and then responds with funding. If you would like to donate to this worthy nonprofit organization or would like more information, please send an email to naperseniors@gmail.com.



Own Your Home or Rent: Which is Best?

By Monika Peterson
Senior Task Force Member

The decision to own or rent a home is a crucial one, especially for seniors. Both options have their advantages and disadvantages, which include more than income as a factor. **Owning a home** can be a fulfilling experience for seniors, providing a sense of stability and security. Here are some **benefits** that owning a home provides:

1. **Long-term investment.** Real estate values tend to appreciate over time, making a home a valuable long-term investment.
2. **Customization.** As homeowners, seniors have the freedom to make changes and improvements to their property to suit their needs and preferences.
3. **Sense of community.** Owning a home can foster a sense of community and belonging, as seniors are more likely to become involved in local activities and events.
4. **Tax benefits.** Home ownership comes with tax benefits, such as mortgage interest and property tax deductions.

However, owning a home also comes with **responsibilities** including:

1. **Maintenance and repairs.** Homeowners are responsible for maintenance and repairs, which can be physically and financially demanding.
2. **Property taxes.** Property taxes can increase over time, adding to the financial burden of home ownership.
3. **Market fluctuations.** The value of the home can fluctuate, potentially affecting the senior's financial security.

Renting a home can be an attractive option for seniors who prefer a low-maintenance lifestyle. Here are some **benefits**:

1. **Flexibility.** Renting allows seniors to move more easily, whether it's to a different location or to a different type of living arrangement.
2. **Less financial burden.** Renters are not responsible for maintenance and repairs, which can be a significant cost savings.
3. **Access to amenities.** Many rental properties offer amenities such as pools, fitness centers, and community spaces that may not be feasible for homeowners.
4. **No property taxes.** Renters do not have to pay property taxes, which can be a significant cost savings.

However, renting also comes with some **drawbacks**:

1. **No long-term control.** Renters may not have control over their living situation, as the property can be sold, or the landlord can decide not to renew the lease.
2. **Rent increases.** Rent can increase over time, potentially making it difficult for seniors to afford their living arrangements.
3. **Limited customization.** Renters may have limited ability to make changes to the property, which can be frustrating for those who value customization.

Ultimately, the decision to own or rent a home as a senior depends on individual circumstances, priorities, and preferences. While owning a home can provide a sense of stability and security, it also comes with significant responsibilities. Renting, on the other hand, can offer flexibility and a lower financial burden, but may lack the long-term control and customization that homeowners enjoy.

Renting

- After each rent payment, that money is gone.
- Can't make any changes to the property.
- Rental prices can go up with lease renewals.
- You're paying a mortgage, just not your own!

- No tax advantage.

Owning

- Each payment builds your wealth and equity.
- Freedom to renovate.
- Monthly mortgage payment stays the same for those with fixed-rate mortgages.
- You're paying down your own mortgage.
- Tax advantage.

It is essential for seniors to carefully consider their options and weigh the pros and cons of each before deciding. Consulting with a financial advisor or other experts can also help seniors make an informed decision that aligns with their unique needs and goals.



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.

Internet Archive Genealogy Resource
7 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, July 17

Meeting Room A, 95th Street Library

Can't find it on Ancestry? Discover the incredible resources available on Internet Archive, including city directories, county histories, gazetteers, yearbooks and family genealogies!

Accessibility Features on Your Smartphone

1 to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, July 30
Meeting Room C, 95th Street Library

Make your smartphone work for you! We'll guide you through accessibility features for vision, hearing, speech and more. You'll learn how to customize your phone to suit your needs, making it easier and more comfortable to use.

Farm-to-Table Appetizers

2 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 2
Community Room, Nichols Library

There's nothing like the flavor of fresh, farm-to-table ingredients! Chef Cherise Slattery will share garden-fresh appetizers using zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes, corn, peppers, fresh herbs and berries. Enjoy tasting samples such as Grilled Corn Crostini and Harvest Salsa, as Chef prepares her favorite recipes.

Lifelong Habits for Better Health

7 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 5
Online

Explore the powerful connection between mental and physical health, focusing on how sustainable habits can boost overall well-being. In this program, you'll learn practical, evidence-based strategies for balanced nutrition, regular exercise, mindfulness and stress management. *Registration required. This program will be presented via Zoom.

The King of Hollywood: Clark Gable

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

Discover the extraordinary life and career of Clark Gable, one of cinema's most iconic actors. Known as "The King of Hollywood," Gable's charisma, rugged charm and exceptional talent captivated audiences for decades. Join Valerie Gugala as she explores his life, accomplishments, and enduring influence as a legendary figure.

Things to do Around Town

Naperville Community Concert Center Municipal Band Concerts

This concert venue is home to the Naperville Municipal Band and other performances by community groups. All shows are free and open to the public. The Naperville Municipal Band's season runs June-August on Thursday evenings beginning at 7:30 p.m. Here are the summer dates:

- July 17 – Naperville Trivia Night
- July 24 – The Wonder of Water
- July 31 – Celebration of the Big Band
- August 7 – Tone Colors
- August 14 – Summer's End ... Memories Begin

Paddleboat Quarry

Right on the riverwalk and near Centennial Beach is the Paddleboat Quarry, where you are able to rent a paddleboat or kayak from May through October.

Moser Tower and Millennium Carillon

This musical tower is open to visitors on weekends. Climb all 253 steps to the top to enjoy gorgeous views of the surrounding city. Did you know that Moser Tower is taller than the Statue of Liberty? Walk to the top and you'll be able to see the Riverwalk, Centennial Beach and even the [Chicago skyline](#).

Knoch Knolls Nature Center

Learn all about the DuPage River's formation, local wildlife, and the earliest settlers of the surrounding land at this site on the DuPage River. Annual events include festivals, adult hikes, family nature nights and more.

Naperville Century Walk

Naperville's Century Walk is home to more than 40 pieces of public art. The public art initiative began in 1996 with murals, mosaics, sculptures and more throughout the downtown area. Check out the interactive map at centurywalk.org, to plan your route and choose which pieces to see.

Naperville Trolley & Tours

The Naperville Trolley & Tour company offers private and group tours with a range of topics, including historic tours and bar hops. The family-run operation has a long history of keeping their guests happy and satisfied while they whisk them around town on any of their small fleet of trolleys.

Free Museum Passes through Rep. Janet Yang Rohr's office

Complimentary passes are available to 16 area museums, parks and zoos through State Rep. Yang Rohr's office. Visit www.RepYangRohr.com and click on "Museum Pass."

According to the website:

You can reserve our district's pass by filling out the form, and a member of our team will be in contact with you to set up an appointment to pick up and drop off the pass. The pass can be used by the holder plus three guests and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The pass is non-transferrable. You will need to present the pass with a letter we will provide, along with an ID. If you are not a resident of our district, please reach out to your representative to see if they have a similar program.

According to a Rep. Yang Rohr employee, a recent participant reported saving more than \$100 on a family outing by using the pass.

Books Recommended for Seniors

"Where the Crawdads Sing," by Delia Owens. This is a beautiful blend of mystery and coming-of-age genres. It follows the life of the "Marsh Girl" and the secrets of a small town.

"Beneath a Scarlet Sky," by Mark Sullivan. Based on a true story, this novel follows an Italian teenager who becomes a spy for the Allies during World War II.

"Tuesdays with Morrie," by Mitch Albom. This touching memoir is about the author's time spent with his former college professor, who imparts life lessons as he faces terminal illness.



The Sandwich Generation: Caught Between Caregiving and Career

By Shazia Khan

Senior Task Force Member

The “Sandwich Generation” refers to adults — typically in their 30s to 50s — who find themselves caring for aging parents while also supporting their own children. It’s a balancing act that many of us didn’t anticipate, but one that has become an increasingly common reality in modern life.

I never thought I’d be coordinating my mom’s medical appointments while helping my teenager navigate high school, all before starting my workday. But here I am, like so many others in this middle stretch of life, pulled in multiple directions, trying to hold everything together with patience and love.

This generation’s struggles are rooted in longer life expectancies and delayed financial independence among young adults. People are living well into their 80s and 90s, often requiring extensive care. At the same time, the rising cost of education and housing means children remain financially dependent longer than in previous generations.

Managing the needs of both parents and children, all while holding down a job, often leads to chronic stress and emotional fatigue. According to a 2020 Pew Research Center study, nearly 50% of Americans in their 40s and 50s have at least one parent over 65 and are also raising or financially supporting a child. The demands can feel overwhelming — there are days when I feel like I’m barely treading water.

Finances are another significant pressure point. Between health expenses for aging parents and school or college costs for kids, savings can quickly dwindle. It’s not uncommon for people in the Sandwich Generation to put their own financial goals, such as saving for retirement, on the back burner.

Yet, despite the challenges, there are meaningful moments. The unexpected heart-to-hearts with my father, or the laughs shared with my daughter after a long day, remind me that this time, though stressful, is also deeply human and full of connection.

Support is crucial. Employers who offer flexible hours or remote work options can make a real difference. Government policies around caregiver tax credits and affordable eldercare and childcare can ease the load. And perhaps most importantly, we need to talk more

openly about this experience — to normalize it, support one another, and create a culture of empathy.

For many of us, being part of the Sandwich Generation isn't a role we chose — but it's one we're doing our best to honor with resilience, love, and a good sense of humor.



Grandparenting: A Role of Love, Legacy, and Lifelong Connection

By Shazia Khan

Senior Task Force Member

Grandparenting today is more than just spoiling the kids with sweets and slipping them \$5 bills when their parents aren't looking. It's a deeply personal, evolving role — one that brings joy, purpose, and, yes, a fair share of challenges. As families grow and change, so too does what it means to be a grandparent in the modern world.

When my parents became grandparents, I saw something shift in them. My mother, once always on the move and busy with work, suddenly had all the time in the world to sit on the floor building Lego castles with her grandson. My father, never the overly sentimental type, became the storyteller, weaving tales from his childhood for wide-eyed grandkids. Watching them connect in this new way gave me a deeper appreciation for their wisdom, patience, and the quiet love that often goes unspoken.

Today grandparents are more involved than ever. Many are not just weekend visitors or holiday hosts — they're a consistent, stabilizing presence in their grandchildren's lives. Some, due to life circumstances, are even raising their grandchildren full-time. According to the AARP, in the U.S. alone, more than 2.7 million grandparents have taken on this primary caregiving role. Others are helping regularly — school pickups, after-school snacks, and emergency babysitting sessions are all part of the gig.

Technology has also reshaped grandparenting. My children, when they were younger, used to have video calls with their grandparents nearly every evening. Whether it's a

quick check-in or a full-on virtual bedtime story, the connection is there, constant and comforting. It's amazing how something as simple as a FaceTime call can bridge states or even countries.

But it's not always easy. Today's parenting styles often differ from those of previous generations and navigating that difference with grace can be tricky. Grandparents may sometimes struggle with when to offer advice and when to step back. Respect, communication, and a willingness to adapt are key. The best relationships between parents and grandparents are based on trust — not just in each other, but in the shared love for the child at the center.

For many, grandparenting brings renewed purpose. It's a chance to pass on family traditions, share values, and create memories that will last long after we're gone. It's not about doing things perfectly — it's about being present, being loving, and showing up in the ways that matter.

In the end, grandparenting is a beautiful reminder that love truly is generational. It flows down through stories, hugs, laughs, and life lessons, leaving a legacy far richer than any inheritance.



A Reflection on Being Grandparents

By Kathy McGowan

Former Senior Task Force Co-Chair

We're called "Mema" and "Papa" by our grandchildren. We are fortunate that they live only about 20 minutes from us. We have friends whose grandkids live in other states, which means regular travel to see them. That's the thing about grandparents — they'll travel hours by plane, train or automobile to see their little urchins. And, of course, they believe their offspring are the cutest, brightest and funniest little humans on earth!

We see ours once a week — maybe more depending on life events. What is it about those visits that give us such joy and pleasure? Is it the fact that they tell us that they love us without prompting? Is it that we see their growth spurts? (Our granddaughter now wears size 9 shoe at age 11.) Is it that we revel in their funny remarks and silly faces? (Our grandson tells us that he thinks like an engineer and he's 6.) Is it going to band concerts and marveling at their progress between the months of August and May? Or seeing your very own granddaughter sing a solo at the choral concert? Or your grandson

go from being afraid to take a dip in the pool to jumping in with abandon?

These life events give us a renewed sense of purpose, a reason to be here witnessing the constant birthing of a new generation. It is refreshing and renewing to see how grandchildren move from frightened children to more self-confident ones; how they are becoming more independent and yet still need Mom and Daddy.

I'm aware of the belief that having grandchildren is a true joy of aging. With all the aches and pains of growing older, grandchildren can make you feel younger and more fit, even if that is a fallacy. Once, when my husband was having a hard time getting up from the floor after playing with the kids, our granddaughter came over to demonstrate how easy it is to get up — 1,2,3 there! We smiled at how easy it is for her. We marvel at their intelligence, vocabulary and understanding of simple life truths. And the fact that they are smarter than we ever were at their age!

All these are part of the joy of being a grandparent. There is also something special about seeing your own child parent these grandchildren. It's amazing how patient and understanding they can be about the prepubescent pangs of "junior highdom." Or the crises of kindergarten, which cause such hurt. I admire how our daughter faces each new development with courage and just handles it. As a single mom, all lands in her lap daily and she's there for it. I wonder if I would have had the wherewithal to do so well.

Being a grandparent is a JOY! It touches something deep within us. We recognize the generativity that occurs with each limb of the tree of life. If we are the trunks of the family tree, our grandchildren are the leaping branches that fly in the breeze and laugh with the wind.

Grandparent or No — It's all OK

By Gwenn Lloyd

Senior Task Force Member

I was 41 when my daughter was born. My husband and I were in our sixteenth year of marriage (we are now in year 48). By the time this fabulous human being entered our lives, I had heard and experienced all kinds of judgments directed our way. It was mostly just subtle incomprehension of how you could build a life that is full and rewarding without parenting being at the core of your existence.

Thirty plus years later I'm surrounded by seniors in full grandparent mode. I'm happy for them that they are fulfilled. But I still get pauses and sometimes voiced comments about how I would feel differently about something when and if I join the grandparents club. Maybe, but probably not.

Grandparenting is a life stage that not everyone experiences. It could be by choice or circumstance, but for some seniors this life stage is just not happening in the same timeframe as others' lives are unfolding. It may not happen at all for some. And that's OK.

By the time the half-century mark of our life comes around, we have accumulated a fair amount of life experiences. It's what makes us all unique. We also know that it's not the job we have, the car we drive, the house we live in, etc. that gives us value and makes us fun to be around. I will say that parenting has been the most rewarding journey my husband and I have traveled. But we have been on many other life journeys in our time together, as well as independently, that have made us who we are.

If you feel the need to mentor little ones and share your life experiences, there are opportunities to do that in your community regardless of whether or not you have grandchildren. My daughter's biological grandparents lived out of state. We welcomed an absolutely wonderful "adopted" grandmother into our family to help with babysitting and to engage in family activities. If you — like many of us — are not in the grandparent club,

please do not feel discontent. Life can still provide many worthwhile rewards. If they don't come to you, go out and find them!



Sponsored by Dementia Friendly Naperville and The Naperville Senior Task Force

Join us for a social gathering of individuals living with dementia and their care partners and connect with others in similar situations. Activities at this FREE event vary including education, music, games and arts.

Memory Café Schedule

1st Tuesday of each month from 1:00 – 2:30pm at
Fort Hill Activity Center (20 Fort Hill Dr.)
and
2nd Tuesday of each month from 2:00 – 3:30pm at
95th Street Library (3015 Cedar Glade Dr.)

For more information or to register email:
DementiaFriendlyNaperville+info@gmail.com

Walk Ins Welcome



Dementia Caregiver Support Groups

Presented by: Alzheimer's Association

**The Fourth Tuesday of the month
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Naperville Public Library

95th Street Library 3015 Cedar Glade Drive

Naperville, IL 60564

Run by Lisa Kirchner

**The Third Thursday of the month
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Alfred Rubin Community Center, Room 201

305 W. Jackson Ave

Naperville, IL 60540

Run by Amy Friedman and Arlene Orr

To register for EITHER support group email:
DementiaFriendlyNaperville+info@gmail.com

Build a support system with people who understand.

Alzheimer's Association® support groups, conducted by trained facilitators, are a safe place for people living with dementia and their care partners to:

- Develop a support system.
- Exchange practical information on challenges and possible solutions.
- Talk through issues and ways of coping.
- Share feelings, needs and concerns.
- Learn about community resources.

Visit www.alz.org/illinois to learn more about caregiver programs and resources. To further extend your network of support, visit ALZ connected®, our online community, at alzconnected.org.

800.272.3900 | alz.org®

2025 Senior of the Year Award

Nominate a senior who serves
the community selflessly!



Nominations due **Aug. 31**

For more information or to nominate someone, scan the QR Code below or visit naperville.il.us/seniortaskforce.

**Nominees must be 65 or older and reside in Naperville.*



Questions?

Email nominateasenior@gmail.com

The award will be presented at the Naperville City Council Meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 7.



DUPAGE COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS

OLDER ADULT POPULATION STATISTICS



People 65+ were the fastest growing age group between 2010 and 2021 with a population increase of 45%

DuPage Older Adult Population Numbers:

2010 107,228 2021 155,352

Percentage of DuPage's population age 65+ (2021)



Over 1/3 of DuPage's population is 50 years or older (2021)

OLDER ADULT POPULATION PROJECTIONS



194,695 in 2025

224,115 in 2030



increase in 5 years

NUMBERS SERVED IN FY22

32,000 older adults 60+ depended on:



transportation services



friendly phone calls & visits



in-person & online services



caregiver resources

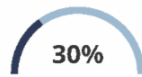


nutrition services

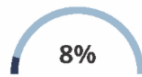
DEMOGRAPHICS OF OLDER ADULTS



of older adults are limited English-speaking



of older adults live alone



of older adults live below the poverty line

Data compiled from the US Census Bureau, IL Department of Public Health, and Older Americans Act service provider data.



AgeGuide
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

(800) 528-2000 • info@ageguide.org • www.AgeGuide.org

Serving DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry & Will Counties

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!

Disclaimer: The distribution of this information does not imply Naperville Senior Task Force or City of Naperville endorsement.



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