



OCCOA

OTSEGO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING



Submitted by
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RESEARCH &
VOLUNTEER
COORDINATOR

*We Help.
We Care*

120 Grandview Blvd., Gaylord, Michigan 49735

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**OCCOA
SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR
MICHELLE DUNKELBERG**

“Visit” Greece at the next International Luncheon!

Staff members at the Otsego County Commission on Aging (OCCOA) are constantly on the lookout for new programs, activities, and services that can be effectively offered to older adults in Otsego County. All agency programs seek to address the agency’s mission of promoting the independence and well-being of older adults of Otsego County and supporting family caregivers.

The agency works hard to support older adults and caregivers by providing in-home services, home-delivered and congregate meals, adult day services, and various support groups (Caregiver, Parkinson, Grandparents, etc.). Health and educational programming, advocacy services, and volunteer services and opportunities are available as well. No less important, however, are the agency’s social events and activities. Special Events Coordinator Michelle Dunkelberg recently shared with me, “Some of the agency’s goals include offering events and activities that will bring people together to give them the opportunity to socialize with their friends, meet new people, eat a great meal, and enjoy some entertainment.”

OCCOA Executive Director Dona Wishart stressed the importance of including social activities in the agency’s program offerings, noting that, “In our later years, we may be spending a great amount of time alone.” She continued, “Older adults can dispel loneliness, in part, by staying engaged with their community and by participating in social events. The social events offered by the OCCOA seek to add value and meaning to the lives of older adults by allowing them opportunities to break away from their routines, have fun, and to reach out in friendship to others.”

The OCCOA Meal Program currently provides nutritious meals to Otsego County older adults (age 60 and older) on various days of the week in a social setting at three meal sites in the county: Gaylord Alten Zimmer, Elkland Senior Center in Vanderbilt, and the Charlton Township Hall in Johannesburg. To add variety, the Meal Program has traditionally teamed up with the agency’s Special Events Department over the past several years to host a Thanksgiving Party in November, a Holiday Party in December, an Irish Celebration in March and a Picnic Lunch in July at the Gaylord Meal Site. These parties have always included decorations to suite the theme, a 50/50 and prize drawing, extra-special meals, entertainment and, of course, a lot of fun!

Seeing how much fun these special meals were for those in attendance, OCCOA Meal Program Coordinator Sue Bannister thought it might be nice to offer more of these types of special events throughout the year. She noted, “I also wanted to introduce people to ethnic foods they might never have had an opportunity to try.” Thus, the OCCOA International Luncheon series was born! To make it all happen, the Meal Program teamed up with the Special Events Program, and the first luncheon was held last October. The luncheon featured an Oktoberfest theme, complete with a German menu, decorations, and entertainment. Bannister noted, “To add to the fun, the staff dressed in clothing associated with German Oktoberfests, and we invited our participants to do the same.” She added, “We also awarded a prize for ‘best dressed for the theme.’”



**OCCOA MEAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR
SUZANNE BANNISTER (CENTER) WITH HER STAFF,
MEAL PROGRAM ASSISTANTS
WANDA CHERWINSKI (LEFT) AND JEAN HAGUE (RIGHT)**



**KIM TAYLOR AND HER MOM,
BETTY DELAUTER, ENJOY THEIR TIME AT
THE HAWAIIAN LUNCHEON IN JANUARY**

Kim Taylor attended the second luncheon of the series that was held in January, with her mother, Betty Delauter. This time, the theme was Hawaiian. Taylor shared with me, “My mother recently moved up from Waterford, Michigan to live with me and my husband.” She recalled, “We were at one of the congregate meals one day and saw a flyer advertising the Hawaiian Luncheon. It was going to include music and sounded like fun, so we came.” She added, “The decorations were nice and the food was good. I also enjoyed listening to the music provided by Doug Thomas!” She concluded, “The luncheon gave my mom and me an opportunity to be together in a nice setting.”

Kim’s mom, Betty, recalled, “The luncheon was very nice and I had a good time. It was also a nice change of pace.” She explained, “Since I moved here, Kim and I have been kind of tied down with a lot of doctor’s appointments. This luncheon allowed us to get out of the house and have a good time.” She mused, “I was a little bit embarrassed because I am new to the area and won three prizes in the drawing!”

Area adults will have an opportunity to “visit” the country of Greece at the next luncheon planned for April 12, 2011. Bannister noted, “We will be featuring Greek food, decorations, and music. We also invite anyone who would like to do so, to wear a toga.” She offered, “Anyone needing guidance on making a toga is invited to come to the Alten Zimmer dining room on Thursday, April 7th, at 1 p.m., where there will be a short informal demonstration. She added, “Be sure to bring a sheet!”

TO SIGN UP FOR THE GREEK LUNCHEON SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2011, PLEASE CALL OCCOA AT (989) 732-1122. THE COST IS \$5 PER PERSON. ENTERTAINMENT WILL BEGIN AT 11 A.M., LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT NOON, AND EACH PARTICIPANT WILL RECEIVE A FREE TICKET FOR THE 50/50 AND PRIZE DRAWINGS. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, PLEASE LOG ONTO OUR WEBSITE, WWW.OTSEGOCOUNTYCOA.ORG.

989.732.1122 • www.OtsegoCountyCOA.org • Advocacy 989.732.9977

Fax: 989-731-2739 • occoa@occoaonline.org • Weekdays 8:00 am to Noon and 12:30 to 4:00 pm

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