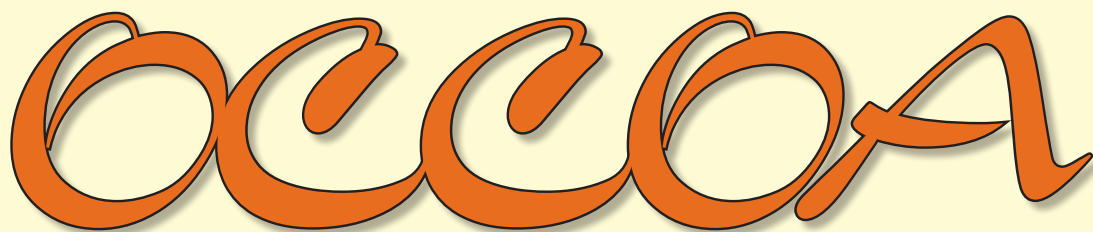




*We Help.  
We Care*



**OTSEGO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING**

120 Grandview Blvd., Gaylord, Michigan 49735



Submitted by  
*Eileen Godek*  
**RESEARCH &  
VOLUNTEER  
COORDINATOR**

**Home**

- Board of Directors
- Agency Representatives
- FAQ
- Customer Service
- Staff
- Aging Resources
- Complaint Resolution Procedure

**Activities Calendar**

**Advocacy Department**

- Transitions in Life

**Caregiver Support Group**

**Creating Confident Caregivers Workshop**

**Donations and Planned Gifts**

- Make a Donation
- Make a Planned Gift
- Testimonials
- Donor Wall

**Educational Breakfast Series**

**Employment Opportunities**

**Fall Prevention Programs**

- A Matter of Balance
- Young at Heart

**Grandparents Raising Grandkids**

**In-Home Service**

**Meal Program**

- Menus
- Meal Reservations

**Medical Resources Department**

**Medical Transportation Program**

**Medicare / Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP)**

**Otsego Haus - Adult Day Services**

**Parkinson Support Group**

**Prime Times**

**Special Events**

- See What's New!

**Technology & Aging ~ TAP**

**Volunteer Program**

- Volunteer Opportunities
- Volunteer Registration

## OCCOA Board of Directors ~ Serving Otsego County since 1979!

In a community where family values are still important and folks watch out for each other, especially those who are most vulnerable, caring for older adults has long been a priority for Otsego County residents. The idea of serving the county's elderly began back in the 1970s when a group of folks volunteered their time to prepare potluck-style meals for them in what most county residents know, today, as the Community Center.

However, the budget was small, and thus limited the numbers of older adults who could benefit from this volunteer meal program. It didn't take long before community leaders recognized and promoted the need for a formal organization that would enable even more older adults to benefit from a formally-structured meal program and other much-needed services – services that could be applied for and funded from Older American Act dollars and state grants.

### The OCCOA was formerly established in July 1979!

Thanks to the persistence and urgings of these dedicated leaders, the Otsego County Board of Commissioners established the Otsego County Commission on Aging in July 1979 to operate as a business unit of the county. The new agency was charged with being primarily concerned with the county's services and responsibilities to its older adults. This included coordinating, providing, and initiating public and private programs, and promoting their independence and well-being.

Once the agency was established, a board of directors was recruited, federal and state grants were applied for and awarded, and the first part-time employees were hired. Ten years later, a local millage was passed to provide even more services to an even broader base of older adults.

In 1993, new management was hired to bring progressive, private management techniques, principals, and policies to this public agency (still in place today), thereby helping the agency to become a leader among similar agencies in the region, as well as across the state. Today, the agency is staffed by 34 employees. There are 250 individual volunteers and 17 volunteer groups who provide assistance to various programs throughout the year. Whether staff or volunteers, all are dedicated to provide the highest quality of customer service by "helping and caring" for older adults in Otsego County.

The agency is governed by a volunteer board of directors that consists of nine voting members and two liaisons (one from the Otsego County Board of Commissioners, and the other from the Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency, also known as NEMCSA). All serve in the capacity of volunteers and attend meetings every other month.

### Meet the Current OCCOA Board of Directors!

**Jack Thompson**, the executive director of the University Center at Gaylord, is the current OCCOA board president. He shares, "I joined the board because I feel the future of our community will be guided by how we treat our aging population. I wanted to be a part of that since I plan to live here my entire life. I also want to contribute to Gaylord's senior population to make it everything it can be." He adds, "As a person with a business background, I see a vibrant full-service Commission on Aging as being an important component to our county's economic development."

Thompson reflects on his involvement with the OCCOA board. "I greatly appreciate the management team [Executive Director Dona Wishart and Director Dale Gehman], as well as the strategic emphasis of the board."

**Mary Sanders**, the assessor and supervisor for Hayes Township, has been a member of the OCCOA board since the late 1980s and currently serves in the capacity of its vice president. She recalls, "I first became involved with the agency when I assisted seniors with their tax credits. I appreciated the beginnings of the agency and how it was growing and improving. When I was asked to be a part of that growth, I was thrilled!"

### MARY SANDERS, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE OCCOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



She reflects, "Through the years, I have worked with several directors and have been impressed with the professional and knowledgeable direction that they have provided for the agency." She adds, "The staff, at all levels, makes a huge difference in the lives of our seniors. All the services we provide are special. OCCOA truly makes lives easier for so many of our citizens." She concludes, "The OCCOA is well known throughout the state. We are the leaders!"

**Pat Slominski** is a county retiree who, until recently, was a mediator with Community Mediation Services for 12 years. She serves as the OCCOA board secretary. She shares, "I joined the OCCOA Board of Directors to assist them in the important job they do in taking care of the needs of the elderly in our community and in Otsego County." She reflects, "I appreciate being an OCCOA board member because I want to assist the agency in the meaningful work they do."

**James Camiller**, CPA, is the owner of James Camiller, CPA, in Lewiston. A resident of Otsego County, he currently serves the OCCOA Board of Directors as its treasurer. He notes, "I joined the board because I wanted to become more involved with the community." He adds, "I also wanted to be a contributor to the success of the agency."

Also serving on the OCCOA Board of Directors are Richard Beachnau, attorney Alan Couture, Gaylord City Manager Joe Duff, Rudi Edel, and Pastor Jim Mathis. Lee Olsen is the Otsego County Commissioner's Board liaison. Sadly, Bob Harden, who served for many years as the NEMCSA liaison, passed away in mid-November. His contribution to the OCCOA Board of Directors, as well as our community, will always be remembered and appreciated.



**OCCOA BOARD MEMBERS  
JIM MATHIS (LEFT) AND LEE OLSEN**

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OCCOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, DATES AND TIMES OF BOARD MEETINGS, OR THE OCCOA'S SERVICES, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE, [WWW.OTSEGOCOUNTYCOA.ORG](http://WWW.OTSEGOCOUNTYCOA.ORG).**

**989.732.1122 • [www.OtsegoCountyCOA.org](http://www.OtsegoCountyCOA.org) • Advocacy 989.732.9977**

**Fax: 989-731-2739 • [occoa@occoaonline.org](mailto:occoa@occoaonline.org) • Weekdays 8:00 am to Noon and 12:30 to 4:00 pm**

**120 GRANDVIEW BLVD. ✦ GAYLORD, MICHIGAN 49735**