

Active Aging Week:

Plan early to maximize your impact

This yearly campaign highlights the potential for people to live better longer with wellness as their foundation. It's also a perfect platform to showcase your organization. Now's a good time to start planning your participation

Every year Active Aging Week® presents people of all ages with opportunities to reimagine aging and redefine what *active* means to them. Challenging negative perceptions of aging, the health observance and public awareness campaign shows the possibilities inherent in people living

longer, more engaged and healthier lives. It also promotes multidimensional wellness lifestyles that support living better longer.

In 2024 the national campaign—led by the International Council on Active Aging® and presented by Humana—takes place September 30 through October 6. Across the active-aging industry, public, private and nonprofit organizations individually and collectively promote healthier, more engaged aging through their participation. Through activities and events that these organizations host at the local level, the week gives primarily adults ages 50+ opportunities to take part

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Residents had fun posing with a vintage car for a photoshoot during Active Aging Week 2023 at Berwick Qualicum Beach, located on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Image courtesy of Berwick Retirement Communities



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Showing their Active Aging Week spirit, Spanish Cove's dragon boat paddlers raced in the 2023 Oklahoma Regatta Festival, held on the Oklahoma River. The community boasts two competitive teams, the Silver Dragons and the Golden Dragons. Image courtesy of Spanish Cove Retirement Village

in wellness programming. Individuals experience the camaraderie of shared fun, goodwill and adventure.

Organizations do not pay to become official host sites for Active Aging Week. What they gain is a platform to reach out and make a difference in their local communities and neighborhoods, as well as to showcase their programs, services and environments. They also demonstrate their commitment to wellness as a way of life.

“As Active Aging Week enters its third decade, local host organizations and participants continue to redefine and model what it means to age actively,” says Colin Milner, ICAA founder and CEO. “It’s inspiring to see the creativity and care that organizers put into their planning so participants can ‘give it a go’—whether that means trying something new or increasing current efforts.” Milner adds, “These experiences bring people together

in meaningful, heart-warming ways that can have lasting benefits.”

If you’ve never hosted Active Aging Week before, why not get involved this year? Veteran organizers consistently advise an early start when planning your participation, so regardless of whether it’s your first year or your twentieth, now is a good time to begin.

‘Uniquely yours’

Active Aging Week takes place in lots of different settings. Among the organizations that have embraced the observance are senior living communities and seniors centers, fitness/wellness centers, health clubs and YMCAs, recreation centers and public libraries, hospital fitness programs, rehabilitation centers and home health agencies, along with government departments and area agencies on aging. What’s so refreshing about the campaign is that the week’s offerings can differ

dramatically from one host organization to another, yet its overarching purpose and spirit unite everyone.

As an Active Aging Week host, you are free to create a schedule of events and activities that’s uniquely yours. Given the industry’s diversity, ICAA believes that you know best what programming will meet the needs of your constituents and your organization, as well as the constraints of your staffing and budget. For that reason, the campaign has only three guidelines. Events and activities should be:

- no-to-low cost (so money is no barrier to participants)
- educational
- provided in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere

If you’re hosting for the first time, you might feel more comfortable planning a single activity or a few. If you’re a veteran



The Fit in Boonsboro fitness center in Boonsboro, Maryland, hosted a local nutrition specialist as part of its activities to celebrate Active Aging Week 2023. The presentation highlighted information about The Blue Zones and the impact of nutrition on health for attendees. Image courtesy of Fit in Boonsboro

host and/or have staff and volunteers to lend their support, consider activities to address each dimension of wellness—ICAA endorses seven (physical, spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, vocational and environmental). Some organizers schedule multiple activities to take place every day.

When activities are organized in accordance with the campaign guidelines, the sky's the proverbial limit when it comes to how you choose to celebrate the week. You have the freedom to create your own theme, too, if you wish.

A wide scope

Time and again Active Aging Week veterans have shared how much they enjoy devising their schedules of events. Working individually or in teams, organizers often challenge themselves to come up with appealing new events, novel topics, and creative twists on “tried and true” activities. Sometimes the week is remembered more for how well the

programming connected with and engaged participants. It also can be a launchpad for programs and services that have staying power.

With online options now a staple in some organizations, Active Aging Week activities can cover the spectrum and address multiple dimensions of wellness at one time. Programming has included sock hops and scavenger hunts; picnics and barbecues; birdwatching and nature walks; kayaking and water volleyball; health fairs and brain games; lectures and yoga classes; sports tournaments and fitness challenges; and cooking demonstrations and volunteering. Plus there have been all kinds of excursions, field trips and adventures. In fact, some of the most popular happenings have taken place outdoors or off-site. Participants have explored salt caves, parks and canyons; visited vineyards and historic sites; canoed on lakes; pedaled railbikes; and headed skyward in hot-air balloons.

Below are some fun offerings hosted during Active Aging Week 2023:

- **Silent disco.** Lakewood Retirement Community in Richmond, Virginia, decided on “Aging Artfully” as its theme

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Get involved!

Active Aging Week
September 30–October 6, 2024

Join other active-aging organizations in hosting activities and events to encourage adults ages 50+ to embrace wellness for healthier, engaged living. To access campaign tools and resources online, register your organization as an official host site at www.activeagingweek.com

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At Heisinger Bluffs in Jefferson City, Missouri, Active Aging Week included making bowls with recycled magazine pages for 'Go Green for Health.' Image courtesy of Heisinger Bluffs

for Active Aging Week “to tap into creativity to age well.” While activities took place daily, one that got people moving was a silent disco party, where participants danced to the music playing in their wireless headphones.

- **A biblical perspective.** Located near Zionsville, Indiana, Hoosier Village Retirement Community offered a week’s activities and events focused on positive aspects of aging. Village Chaplain Ron, for example, led an intriguing-sounding discussion on active aging in The Bible.
- **“Skywalking.”** In Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, Berwick House celebrated Active Aging Week with a

variety of activities. In one adventure, explorers tried “Hiking [and sliding down] the Malahat SkyWalk,” allowing them to enjoy views of the rainforest and seas from high in the trees of Vancouver Island.

- **Interactive cooking experience.** At Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, located in Harrisonburg, Virginia, two VMRC chefs cohosted a cooking demonstration in which they—for the first time—led community members in making their own healthy dishes with spaghetti squash. (Notably, VMRC secured local sponsorship for

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Catching the

Every year since 2019, the Active Aging Week Spirit Award has spotlighted five Official Host Sites whose wellness activities during the weeklong observance encouraged people to see the possibilities of aging. The snapshots below outline the 2023 Spirit Award recipients and what they did to redefine *active*:

1. The Spinneys

LiveWell Group’s two active-adult communities in New York, known as The Spinneys, “embraced the theme of ‘try something new’ for Active Aging Week 2023.

“Our staff positively supported and encouraged our residents to step outside their routine and explore new programs that promoted a ‘growth mindset.’ Highlights of the week included new fitness opportunities for the body, mind and spirit (including Barre and Nia classes), Axe Throwing and Archery. It also featured special guest speakers, including the publisher of the *55+ Life* magazine who spoke on ‘living your best life.’” The communities ended the week with a “Pink Mile” walk in support of a local breast cancer nonprofit.

SpinneyLife, a lifestyle program, “actively provides and promotes engaging opportunities for our residents to get inspired to try new things and be motivated in a safe and supportive community of helpful staff and like-minded peers. The highlight and true marker of success for our 2023 Active Aging Week was the positive feedback we received from our residents.”

2. Pine Run Village

Located in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, Pine Run Village said it emphasized the three Cs for Active Aging Week: “Camaraderie, a Can-do spirit, and a splash of friendly Competition!

Spirit! Award recipients reveal Active Aging Week experiences

“The Pine Run Villager Games were a highlight of the weeklong celebration” at this Presbyterian Senior Living life plan community. More than 50 residents took part in eight team activities, which included “Water Volleyball, Bocce, Walking Relay, Billiards, Water Relay Games, Shuffleboard, Cornhole, and even Pumpkin Chucking!” Numerous spectators were on hand to cheer on competitors.

The multiactivity event concluded with an awards ceremony, in which all participants were awarded a gold star certificate to acknowledge their commitment; place ribbons and a floral bouquet were also presented. New for 2023, the community recognized “a few standout residents who truly embodied the Pine Run Spirit throughout the games with their grit, enthusiasm, and adventurous attitude.

“Active Aging Week is an opportunity to increase awareness of how a holistic approach to living, embracing the importance of social connections and play while enhancing physical well-being, can empower residents to live their best life.”

3. Berwick Qualicum Beach

Residents and staff celebrated Active Aging Week 2023 “in many ways” at Berwick Qualicum Beach, a senior living campus in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

“We enjoyed a trip to the local fish hatchery to watch salmon jumping and bears feeding, and tried a new fitness course called Essential Movement and Wellness. We also held a vintage car photoshoot just for fun and completed the photoshoot for our fall/winter edition of our biannual magazine, *Cultivate*.”

At this Berwick Retirement Communities location, the Strings & Sings ukulele band “held a concert [during the week] and 25

community members signed up to join,” boosting the audience to 50. “Our 20-piece band is made up of residents who learned the ukulele two years ago [September 2021], and some in January [2023], many who have never played an instrument before. It is inspiring to see how the band has progressed during this time and how much joy they are able to share with their audiences and each other.”

4. Fit in Boonsboro

During Active Aging Week 2023, participants at Fit in Boonsboro fitness center in Boonsboro, Maryland, “enjoyed a variety of activities, including a community-building lunch at our town’s park, walks, and specialty classes.”

After completing preparations and hanging decorations, “we started the week with a kick-off breakfast and distributed weekly schedules and information. Presentations were held on topics of nutrition as we age, functionally ageless fitness, and health practices. We also held a well-attended, and first-ever (for our gym), book club featuring *The Well-Lived Life* as our read.”

Fit in Boonsboro also organized a popular Health & Wellness Fair “that featured information booths from our local commission on aging, senior center, hospital, and nutrition experts.” Additionally, three separate outdoor walks took place to accommodate as many people as possible, “including our service walk where we collected trash around town. Specialty classes included Active Aging Yoga & Meditation, Barefoot Balance Training, Pelvic Balance Workshop, and Strength & Movement for all ages.” The schedule also featured open Talk with a Trainer hours.

5. Spanish Cove Retirement Village

In Yukon, Oklahoma, Spanish Cove Retirement Village celebrated Active Aging

Week 2023 with activities and events that followed the “active aging” theme.

“The week started with a WALK at the OKC Zoo. We had perfect weather for our wellness walk at the zoo and reached our daily step goals while having fun and seeing some exotic animals.” Local physician Richard Lowrance, III, MD, presented “a nutrition talk on the importance of protein...highlight[ing] how protein and physical activity could boost endurance and performance. Participants received protein drinks and protein balls.” The community also tested 58 individuals on the InBody. “This interpretation of the body composition study gives seniors a quick overview of their bodies and offers tips for learning more about them.” Residents also took part in “a tai chi demonstration and class...” Spanish Cove says.

To wrap up the week’s activities, “our two dragon-boat paddling teams raced at the OKC regatta festival, which is a National Senior Games event.” With at least one competitor aged 90+ on each team, Spanish Cove believes it may have “the oldest competitive paddling team in the US.”

Learn more about the Spirit Award and how to apply at www.activeagingweek.com/awards.php

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the first time in 2023 for its Active Aging Week celebrations. The sponsorships not only funded activities, but also paid for “a new ad campaign to raise awareness in the local community.”)

- **Archery.** Montgomery Parks, located in Montgomery County, Maryland, organized a variety of activities and events, including a “Never Grow Up Socials for 55+” special edition. The “Never Grow Up” program regularly brings people together for fun and games and socializing outdoors. For Active Aging Week, participants learned the fundamentals of archery at South Germantown Driving Range.

For more from the week’s celebrations, turn to “Catching the Spirit!” sidebar on pages 36–37. These snapshots outline the 2023 winners of the annual Active Aging Week Spirit Award, which the campaign presents to recognize the efforts of five local host organizations and their participants.

Stories and photographs from 2023 also populate the Active Aging Week Facebook page (see “Resources”), with hosts sharing memorable moments. The page is well worth a look, especially for first-timers, who can gain a sense of how varied and individual the week’s celebrations can be.

[Ed. As part of participating in Active Aging Week 2024, consider entering the Spirit Award competition to share the highlights from your celebrations. Your organization’s successes can inspire others. Be sure to capture all the fun in photographs to accompany your success story. Please keep in mind that submitted photos will be posted to the Active Aging Week website and may appear in the *Journal on Active Aging*.]

Campaign resources

Among organizations that consistently host Active Aging Week, the observance has become a highlight in their yearly programming. It also can be a touchstone of the organization’s outreach and the relationships that deepen its impact—volunteers, educational partners, re-

sources, media outlets, sponsors, and so on. This synergy creates a living, evolving engagement with active aging that may influence views of aging in local communities and neighborhoods over time.

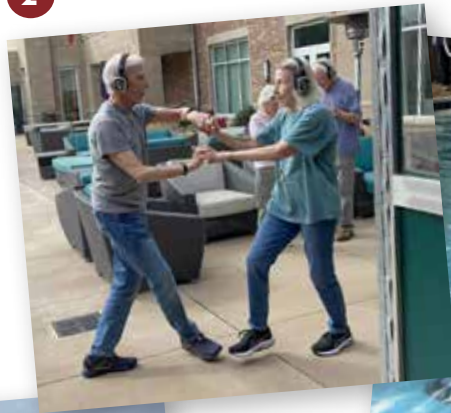
To help organizers with planning and promoting Active Aging Week, the campaign provides a toolkit for official host sites on its website (address noted in “Resources”). Once registered on the site, you gain access to customizable materials (which will be updated for 2024 over the coming months), along with evergreen resources. These include:

- T-shirt designs, logos, posters, banners, flyers, invitations, and certificates
- PowerPoint presentation templates, calendar announcements, fact sheets, and social media templates

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- playbook, articles, videos and podcasts
- downloadable worksheets, planning guides, case studies, and program examples

Among the promotional materials, Theme Days are offered to help official host sites develop or augment programming. Each of these days focuses on a different dimension of wellness. Additional Theme Day resources, supported by the campaign's sponsors, are available via the top menu without registration.

Follow the link on the website's home page to register by filling out a short form. Registration enters your organization and events into a national database, potentially driving interested participants and media your way. By being counted as an official host site, you help to sustain Active Aging Week and its impact with the media and sponsors as well.


Gateway to wellness

With the potential to live better longer, people have opportunities to reimagine aging and enjoy healthier, more engaged lives—today and tomorrow—by adopting a wellness lifestyle as their foundation. Active Aging Week spreads this message widely. For host organizations, the



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campaign is a platform that can extend their reach and multiply their impact.

At ICAA, we look forward to hearing hosts' stories. We hope you will join these efforts this year by hosting the observance in your community or neighborhood. Your health fair, cooking demonstration or meditation walk may end up being a catalyst for personal change, a nudge to increased commitment, or a gateway to a wellness lifestyle for people who feel motivated this time to "give it a go."

ICAA thanks presenting sponsor Humana and national sponsor Abbott Nutrition for their generous support of Active Aging Week® 2024.

Key to Active Aging Week 2023 photos

1. *The Berwick Trail Blazers, a group from Berwick on the Park in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, enjoyed views from the trail in West Highlands Park. Photo: Berwick Retirement Communities*
2. *Active Aging Week participants enjoyed a silent disco, a film festival, an art project and more at Lakewood Retirement Community in Richmond, Virginia. Photo: Lakewood Retirement Community*
3. *The victors cheered the winning point during the Pine Run Villager Games' Water Volleyball event at the Doylestown, Pennsylvania, community. Photo: Pine Run Village, a Presbyterian Senior Living community*
4. *At Seasons Strathroy in Strathroy, Ontario, Canada, a Wii Bowling Tournament ended with a grand champion and other winners during Active Aging Week. Photo: Seasons Retirement Communities*
5. *Axe throwing, archery and Nia movement classes were among the Active Aging Week offerings at The Spinneys, LiveWell Group's active-adult communities in New York. Photo: LiveWell Group*

Resources

Internet

Active Aging Week

www.activeagingweek.com

Active Aging Week: Spirit Awards

www.activeagingweek.com/awards.php

Active Aging Week Official Facebook page

www.facebook.com/ActiveAgingWeek

Spirit Award winners

Berwick Qualicum Beach (Berwick Retirement Communities)

www.berwickretirement.com/bqb

Fit in Boonsboro

www.fitinboonsboro.com/

Pine Run Village (Presbyterian Senior Living)

www.presbyterianseniorliving.org/pine-run-village

Spanish Cove Retirement Village

<https://spanishcove.com>

The Spinneys (LiveWell Group, previously The Spinney Group)

The Spinney at Pond View and The Spinney at Van Dyke

<https://livewellgroup.com/properties/>