



Your path to **healthy. active. independent. lifestyle . . .**

# SENIOR CONNECTIONS

February 2026 | Volume 40, Edition 2

## February Is American Heart Month: How Colonie Senior Service Centers Support Heart-Healthy Living for Seniors

February is American Heart Month, a time to focus on heart health—especially for older adults. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., and seniors are at higher risk due to age-related changes and conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

At Colonie Senior Service Centers (CSSC), we are proud to support seniors in our community by offering programs and services that promote a heart-healthy lifestyle, encourage social connection, and help older adults stay active, informed, and engaged.

Each American Heart Month, we remember those we have lost to heart disease while taking meaningful steps to protect those most at risk. By focusing on movement, nutrition, stress management, education, and social well-being, seniors can take action to support a healthier heart at any age.

AMERICAN  
**HEART**  
MONTH  
.....AT CSSC.....



### How CSSC Helps Support Heart Health:

- Exercise classes through The Center membership and active group trips
- Nutritious congregate lunches that support healthy eating and social connection
- Social and learning activities that reduce stress and improve emotional well-being
- Volunteer opportunities to stay engaged and active
- Transportation services to medical appointments and shopping

Staying active, eating well, managing stress, and staying connected are all important steps toward a healthy heart. This American Heart Month—and all year long—CSSC is proud to help seniors stay healthy, independent, and connected.

### Don't Miss

## Warmth of Winter Wine and Craft Beer Tasting

**Thursday, February 26, 2026**

5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at

**Wolferts Roost Country Club**

120 Van Rensselaer Boulevard

By supporting this event, you are helping to heat the homes of hundreds of Capital Region seniors who struggle to pay their heating bills.

#### Enjoy

- Wine and Craft Beer Tasting
- Hors d'Oeuvres and Light Fare
- Mystery Key Boxes
- Mystery Wine Pull
- Silent Auction
- Dueling Pianos

#### Event Tickets

Individual Ticket \$75/pp.  
Couple's Ticket \$135/couple  
Young Professional (35 and younger) \$35/pp.  
Seniors (age 60 and older) \$35/pp.



To order tickets visit  
[colonieseniors.org/event/warmth-of-winter-event-2026](http://colonieseniors.org/event/warmth-of-winter-event-2026)  
For information, call 518-459-2857 ext. 302



### Events at The Beltrone Living Center

**Friday, February 6** – National Wear Red Day, supporting women's cardiovascular health

**Friday, February 13** – Valentine's Day Party

**Thursday, February 19** – Hands-Only Group CPR Training

**Monday, March 9** – Blood Drive

## Message from the Executive Director

February marks American Heart Month, and it also marks just my second month as Executive Director of Colonie Senior Service Centers. In this short time, I already feel a strong connection to this community. I'm learning every day — from our staff, our volunteers, and especially from the seniors we serve — and I'm grateful to be on this journey with all of you.

Heart health is particularly meaningful to me this year. In December 2024, my father was admitted for an emergency quadruple bypass at age 79. It was a frightening experience and a powerful wake-up call for my entire family. It made us take a closer look at our own heart health and the steps we can take to reduce our risks.

That experience makes it especially motivating to work for an organization like CSSC — one that supports health, independence, and connection for older adults every day. As I walk alongside my own parents and their health challenges in 2026,

I'm reminded how important community, education, and access to supportive services truly are.

My hope this Heart Health Month is that CSSC residents, staff, and our broader community will make time — wherever they are on their journey — to take small steps toward reducing heart health risks. Whether that means moving a little more, managing stress, learning CPR, donating blood, or simply staying connected, every step matters.

I'm happy to support everyone in this effort, no matter where you're starting from. This February, we're offering Hands-Only CPR training on Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> and a blood drive on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, and I hope we can carry this spirit of heart health and prevention forward all year long.

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly into this community. I look forward to learning, growing, and working together to support healthy aging for all.

— Noelle Schmidt  
CSSC, Executive Director



### FREE Tax Filing at The Beltrone

**Thursday, April 2, 2026**  
**The Beltrone Living Center**

IRS-certified volunteers will be at The Beltrone Living Center one day only to offer **FREE** tax filing to households earning less than \$69,000 annually.

Sign up with Kelsie Torello, 518-459-2711, ext. 319.



**UNITED WAY**  
Greater Capital Region

CAPITAL REGION  
**VITA**

Other sites can be found here!  
[GETFREETAXPREP.ORG](http://GETFREETAXPREP.ORG)



**All prepared tax returns  
will be submitted on  
the day of preparation,  
Thursday, April 2, 2026.**



## Mendelssohn Club Spring Concert

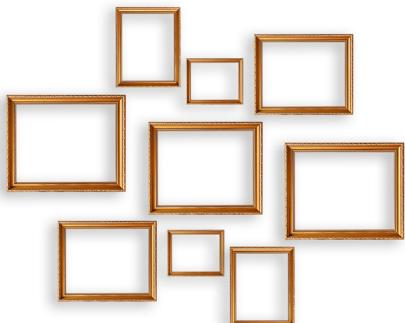


On Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., Colonie Senior Service Centers will be holding a spring concert with the Mendelssohn Club of Albany at The Beltrone Living Center.

This event is free and open to the public. No reservations required. For additional information, please contact Madelyn at 518-459-2857 ext. 340.

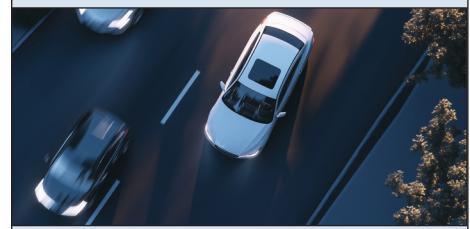
## Calling All Artists

Each month, at the Beltrone Living Center, we host community artists. If accepted, your work will be displayed in our artist gallery in our main hallway with an opening reception that is open to the public. We have immediate openings for photography or different paintings and mediums. If interested, please contact Michael DiGiuseppe, Media Communications Specialist at 518-459-2857, ext. 337 or [mdigiuseppe@colonieseniors.org](mailto:mdigiuseppe@colonieseniors.org).



## Welcome back Liz!

The CSSC family is happy to announce that Liz Hatlee, our Senior Dining Director, is back from maternity leave. In October, Liz and her family welcomed baby Layla into the world and we're thrilled to have her back! If you haven't already, stop by to say hello. We missed you Liz!



## Defensive Driving Classes



Richard Burt, CSSC's Driver Fitness Coordinator, will conduct Defensive Driving Classes on the following dates:

**Classes at The Beltrone Living Center**, 6 Winners Circle, Albany, NY.

- **Friday, February 13, 2026** from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Monday, February 23, 2026** from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Monday, March 9, 2026** from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Class at King Thiel Senior Community**, 17 Elks Lane, Latham, NY.

- **Tuesday, March 3, 2026** from 9:00 a.m. to noon (Part 1) and **Thursday, March 5, 2026** from 9:00 a.m. to noon (Part 2). This is a split class. Must attend both sessions to receive certification.

Cost is credit \$25.75; cash \$25, due before day of class. To reserve your seat, call 518-459-2857, ext. 340.



## Friday February 13<sup>th</sup> – Valentine's Day Party

Come celebrate the day of love, join us from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at The Beltrone for a Valentine's Day party!

Entertainment and Refreshments will be provided!



## A Taste of Ireland – Community Drive Thru

On Thursday, March 12, 2026, Colonie Senior Service Centers will be working with Mazzone Hospitality to create an authentic to-go meal entitled "A Taste of Ireland." The dinner meal will include Potato Leek Soup, Irish Soda Bread, Corned Beef, Potatoes, Cabbage, Carrots, and Chocolate Guinness cake with Irish Cream Icing. Meals may be picked up at The Beltrone Living Center, 6 Winners Circle, Albany, between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

The cost for the meal is credit \$21.63, cash \$21. To make a reservation, please call Madelyn at 518-459-2857, ext. 340.



## WMHT Filming: Aging Together In New York, End of Life Planning

Be a part of WMHT's Aging Together in NY TV filming! We are invited to join this special edition of the long-running WMHT show as part of the town hall audience. The discussion will be between medical providers, legal experts, and specialists in hospice and palliative care. Refreshments will be available.

Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, bus leaves The Beltrone at 8:30 a.m., returns 12:00 p.m.

The cost of the trip is \$10 (cash/check); \$10.30 (credit) Call Caitlyn Kelly, 518-459-2857, ext. 327 to sign up.

## Tool Box

CSSC's Tool Box is a secondhand resale tool store that opened its doors in 2015. Since its opening, Tool Box has kept hundreds of thousands pounds of metal and plastic out of landfills. The store is manned day to day by hard working volunteers, who work together to assist store customers, provide tips and answer questions for any local DIYer or contractor looking for extra help. The Tool Box provides an affordable space for handypeople to purchase necessary items for home improvements at a fraction of the cost. Everything on the shelves are donations. Our volunteers and store manager work tirelessly to ensure our customers are getting the best deal on the block, while providing a great community atmosphere.

The Tool Box is looking for volunteers to join their team. The store is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 pm. Volunteers assist customers, run the register, and take on the occasional "fix-it" project. It is the perfect place for any retired handy people, DIY crafter, or anyone looking for a great volunteer opportunity.

We are located at 143 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham. Right next to the Hill Top Café.



# Need Help Paying Your Heating Bill This Winter?

Colonie Senior Service Centers (CSSC) is now accepting applications for our 2026 Warmth of Winter Heating Assistance Program. Thanks to community support, this program helps eligible seniors with home heating costs—but funding is limited.

**Application Deadline Extended:** Friday, February 20, 2026

**Required:** Completed application, 2024 tax return, and a current utility bill

**Drop off or Mail to:** CSSC, Inc., 6 Winners Circle, Colonie, NY 12205 (Attn: Madelyn Leisenfelder)

Awards are based on financial need and paid directly to National Grid.



If you or a senior you know could use help staying warm this winter, please apply early and share this post to help spread the word!

**Application Deadline Extended to February 20, 2026!**

**SMALL ACT,  
big impact**

In February, a small act can have a big impact on our community. For every \$2.50 reusable Fight Hunger Bag sold at our selected Hannaford, we receive a \$1 donation. Let's make this month memorable!

**Benefiting Organization:**



6 Winners Circle  
Albany, NY

**At the Following Store:**



Hannaford  
98 Wolf Rd,  
Albany, NY



hannaford.2givelocal.com

Fight Hunger Bag Program

## THE CENTER at CSSC

### Paint Fruit using Watercolor Pencils

In this class students will continue to become familiar with watercolor pencils (which are made with water soluble pigments) and its techniques. By the end of class they will have created lovely pieces of fruit. Bring your own colored pencils. Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. with Nancy Lyons. Member price: credit \$29.87 cash \$29, Not-Yet-Member price: credit \$40.17 cash \$39. Call Caitlyn Kelly, 518-459-2857, ext. 327 to sign up.

### Explore the World Through Virtual Reality

We're thrilled to announce that **THE CENTER** has officially scheduled a series of Virtual Reality (VR) sessions for the months ahead—and members are now invited to sign up! These immersive experiences are inspired by the work of Mynd Immersive, a leader in VR designed specifically for seniors.

Using lightweight, easy-to-wear VR glasses, participants can enjoy live-style musical performances, peaceful nature escapes, museum visits, and virtual travel adventures—all without leaving the classroom. Studies in senior communities have shown that VR can boost mood, reduce feelings of isolation, and spark meaningful conversations. We're excited to bring those benefits to our members.

#### How to Participate

We'll be offering a variety of themed VR sessions, including:

- Virtual Travel Journeys to beautiful destinations
- Classic Music Experiences inspired by beloved performers
- Nature & Wellness Escapes for relaxation
- Group VR Adventures you can enjoy together
- Sign-Up Information
- Sessions are now scheduled, and member sign-ups are officially open.
- Spots are limited for each session.
- Registration is first come, first served.

Please stop by **THE CENTER** to reserve your spot.

We look forward to sharing these inspiring experiences with you—come explore, relax, and enjoy something new!

#### Members Only, Free Event.

##### **The Beltrone:**

Wednesdays, February 4<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

##### **King Thiel II:**

Wednesdays, February 18<sup>th</sup>, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

Call Caitlyn Kelly, 518-459-2857, ext. 327 to sign up.





## Aging with Pride

Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. is excited to partner with the Pride Center of the Capital Region to help host Aging with Pride. This is a monthly group for LGBTQ+ folks 55+ designed to allow participants to connect with each other and build community in a safe and accepting space. Join us Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at The Beltrone Living Center, 6 Winners Circle, Albany, and every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month.



## Neighbor Helping Neighbor

As an agency, CSSC continues to support local residents as a good neighbor. In partnership with the Regional Food Bank, our monthly food distribution day helps those in need. Join us on Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup> from approximately 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. at The Beltrone Living Center. Please bring your own reusable grocery bag. We ask for your patience and kindness to be extended to all involved. We do our best to ensure that everyone in attendance receives assistance. **Thank you.**

## Do you or someone you know have difficulty cooking at home?

We are here to help. CSSC is offering nutritious frozen soups and meals for community members who may be recovering from illness, living alone, or simply unable to prepare their own food. Each meal is prepared with care and designed to provide comfort, nourishment, and peace of mind. Whether it is a warm bowl of soup or



a hearty entrée, our goal is to ensure that no one goes without a wholesome meal.

Soups (\$3) and meals (\$6) are available for pickup Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Café at The Beltrone Living Center, King Thiel Senior Community, and King Thiel II Senior Community. For further information, please call 518-459-2857 ext. 340.

## We are grateful to those who have supported the 2025 Year End Annual Fund

Your donations make a lasting difference to seniors and their families.

Adirondack Beverage

Thomas Amyot

Blairhouse Interiors LLC

William and Cynthia Callahan

Jacquelyn Connolly for Transportation

Ralph DeSorbo

Carole and Wayne Diesel for Transportation

Empire Media Newtork Inc.

Jacqueline Endres for The Center at CSSC

David Goldman for Transportation

Tammy Gollmer in memory of Al Wolf

Charles Graham in memory of Robert F. Graham

Christopher and Shirley Greagan

Azra Haqqie for Transportation in memory of Anees Hosain

Paul Hauschen & Mary Anne Hess

Michael M. Hayes

Carla Herbert

Barbara Lagrave

Rosemarie A. Leutchen for Transportation

Tony and Sue Mantello for Bright Horizons

Louise McColgin for Transportation

The Proskin Family for Bright Horizons

Florence Reed

Noelle Schmidt for Bright Horizons in memory of Evelyn Page

Perry F. Smith

Joe Sorrentino for Transportation

**Donations received from 12/22/2025 to 1/15/2026**

# Senior Dining Program

## CSSC Congregate Meal Program February 2026

Join us for a hot meal at The Beltrone Living Center Monday – Friday at Noon. This program is funded in part by the Albany County Dept. for Aging, NYS Office for the Aging, Administration for Community Living, and participant contributions. Suggested participant contribution is \$3.00 for food, and \$3.00 for entertainment. Guests and those under 60 have a required \$11.00 Fee. Registration and reservations are required for this program. Call Liz at 518-459-2857 ext. 303 for reservations by 12:00 p.m. the businessday before.

## February 2026 Menu

Menu items are subject to change

2/2	Onion Soup & 1/2 Turkey Sandwich	2/16	Lunch – Chicken Broccoli Alfredo
2/3	Spaghetti & Meatballs	2/16	Special Dinner – Oregano Lemon Chicken
2/4	Cornflake Chicken	2/17	Baked Ham
2/5	Goulash	2/18	Chicken Marsala
2/6	<b>Special Lunch – Salmon Cakes</b>	2/19	Eggplant Parmesan
2/9	Chicken Piccata	2/20	Oven Fried Fish Sandwich
2/10	Shrimp Scampi	2/23	Chicken Pesto Lasagna
2/11	Chicken Parmesan	2/24	Swedish Meatballs over Egg Noodles
2/12	Pulled Pork Sandwich	2/25	Pot Roast
2/13	Grilled Cheese & Tomato Soup	2/26	Oregano Lemon Chicken
		2/27	Veggie Pizza

### Special Lunch Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>

**at Noon:** Come enjoy a guitar and vocal performance by returning hit Rick Bedrosian!

### Special Dinner Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup>

**at 5 p.m.:** Come enjoy a performance by one-man band "Az Iz"!

## Donations in Action – Through CSSC seniors are active!

**1** Participants of **THE CENTER** visited Via Aquarium in Rotterdam

**2** **THE CENTER** Virtual Reality session. Members got to choose between travel, adventure, nature and arts.

**3** Special Lunch at the Beltrone Living Center with a live performance by duo Lucia & Levi.

**4** Visiting Christmas at Animal Land.

**5** Visit to the FASNY Museum of Firefighting in Hudson.

**6** Learning the art of wreath making.

## CSSC Mission Statement

The mission of Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. (CSSC) is to provide comprehensive services to those in our community who are in or approaching their mature years, and to provide support and services to their families and caregivers.

Through these services, CSSC strives to ensure the physical, mental, emotional and financial well-being of our participants, improve the quality of life, and to enhance the structure and stability of our community as a whole.

## Directory

### Executive Director

Noelle Schmidt  
nschmidt@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 302

### Administrative Operations and HR

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### AmEricorps/RSVP and Volunteers

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### Senior Dining

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518-459-2857, ext. 303

### Tool Box

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518-608-4758

### Transportation Services

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To Schedule a Ride: 518-459-6064

### Umbrella of Colonie

Madelyn Leisenfelder, Coordinator  
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518-459-7152

### The Beltrone Living Center

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518-459-2711

### King Thiel Senior Community and Sheehy Manor

Rachel Hoyka, Site Manager  
rhoyka@colonieseniors.org  
King Thiel: 518-429-6292  
Sheehy Manor: 518-782-2350

### King Thiel II Senior Community

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518-704-4267

### Media and Communications

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518-459-2857, ext. 337



Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.  
6 Winners Circle  
Albany, NY 12205

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Permit No. 74



**Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.**  
**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Friday, March 6, 2026, from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
at The Beltrone Living Center, 6 Winners Circle, Albany, NY**

Initiated in the United States in 1909 and then globally in 1911, International Women's Day (IWD) is a day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

The event is **FREE** and is taking place in the Lakeview Room at The Beltrone Living Center, 6 Winners Circle, Albany.

The event will include art exhibits, live musical performances, lectures and vendor booths for area female entrepreneurs and nonprofit organizations.

For questions or vendor booth information, please call (518) 459-2857 ext. 302.