



# FOCUS

## FEBRUARY 2026



**COMPLETE THE FORM IN IT'S ENTIRETY.**

**PLEASE BE ADVISED:** We can not prepare returns that involve crypto currency, the sale of inherited property, or rental income other than land (example signs/crop).

Free AARP Tax preparation will take place from February 3, 2026 to April 2, 2026 (last day for intake).

Appointments this year will be made only by calling this Google Voice number, 828-583-0019. You **MUST** leave a message with your name and phone number to receive a call back to schedule an appointment. Please note that the call back will be from 828-583-0019, be sure to answer as this is the only way of making an appointment.

**The Senior Center is not making appointments this year for tax preparation.**

After you have made the appointment for tax preparation, you will pick up your tax packet at the Senior Center front desk.

The drop off procedure will be in place again this season, requiring you to bring your tax information into the tax prep room at your scheduled morning time, and you will pick it up the following week in the same location at the scheduled afternoon time, unless more information is needed to complete the return.

**YOU ARE REQUIRED TO PICK UP YOUR INTAKE PACKET AT THE SENIOR CENTER FRONT DESK PRIOR TO YOUR APPOINTMENT AND**

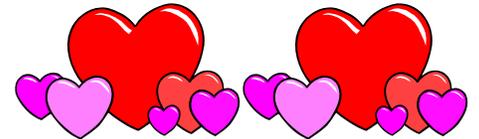
The following are **MANDATORY ITEMS** you need to bring:

- LAST YEAR'S TAX RETURN,
- DRIVERS LICENSE OR OTHER FORM OF ID FOR EACH ADULT ON THE RETURN,
- SOCIAL SECURITY CARD FOR EACH PERSON ON THE RETURN,
- BANKING INFORMATION FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT OF ANY REFUND

**IF YOUR RETURN WAS COMPLETED HERE AT THE CENTER LAST YEAR, CHECK THAT TAX PACKET FOR COPIES OF THESE ITEMS.**

IF YOU CANNOT KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENT, PLEASE BE COURTEOUS AND CALL 828-583-0019 TO CANCEL.

If you are interested in becoming a Home Delivered Meals Volunteer or would like to volunteer for other opportunities in the county please call Jennifer at 828-659-0826.



*Valentine's Dance*

*At*

**McDowell Senior Center**

**Friday, February 6, 2026**



**Advance Tickets: Single \$3.00 or \$5.00 for Couples  
At the Door \$5.00 per person**

**For Tickets or more information contact**

**Brenda Monosso  
(828)659-0832**



**5:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
Doors open at 5:00 pm**

*“Centers for Life Enrichment”*

# THE BUZZZ OF MARION

The Just For Fun Players performed for Christmas at the A.C. Bud Hogan Community Center in Old Fort, also at Autumn Care in Marion and Deer Park Health and Rehabilitation in Nebo. They received warm welcomes by everyone. The audiences really enjoyed the shows and the group was more than happy and to entertain.

Bob Owens from table nine fell backwards down a flight of stairs and was badly bruised and suffered a cut on his arm. Thankfully he did not break any bones.

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers the family and friends of Helen Kehler that passed away on January 4 and Leonard Hughes that passed away on January 13.

By Teresa Gentry and Cathy Laws

## Trivia:

1. What was the name of the fitted, bell-shaped hat popular during the 1920's?
2. What character said the famous movie line "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."?

Answers are on the back page.

## Guess the Definition

### Imbue

1. glow red
2. fade over time
3. dye deeply

Answer is on the back page.



The McDowell Senior Center Dementia Support Group at the McDowell Senior Center will meet on Thursday, February 26 from 1:00-2:30 in the front conference room at the McDowell Senior Center. Future meetings will be held at the same time on the third Thursday of each month.

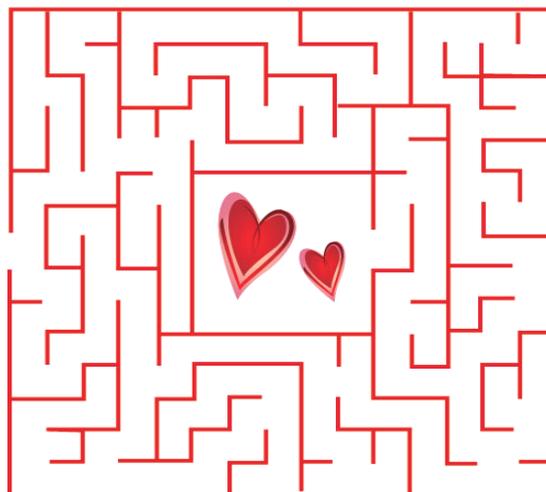
In February, the group will explore the North Carolina Caregiver Portal, gaining valuable tools and resources to help caregivers make informed decisions and caring for their loved ones.

These meetings are for the caregivers, families, and friends of individuals with dementia.

The Dementia Support Group provides a safe, empathetic space for individuals affected by dementia to find guidance, comfort, and connection. If you would like to attend, you can just show up at the meeting or you can RSVP by calling Weyland Prebor at 828-659-0823.



## Valentine's Day Maze



*Find your way to the hearts in the center of the maze.*

# THE BUZZZ OF OLD FORT

We are excited to have a new dance class on Wednesdays at 2pm in the dining room with instructor, Kay Cline. Whether you are a beginner or have line danced before, everyone is welcome to join and have fun learning new steps together.

Please keep Joe Stroud, Cathy Harron, and Betty Suttles in your thoughts and prayers, they have been in the hospital and are recovering at home. Your thoughts and well wishes mean a lot during their recovery. There have also been several out with different bugs that are going around. We will all be glad when everyone is back and this flu/virus season is over.

Our hearts and prayers go out to the family of Lee McIntosh and we also mourn the loss of long-time volunteer, Gerald Lavender. They will both be missed.

By Cheryl Woody & Carey Woody

## McDowell Parkinson's Support Group (MPSG)

**Monday February 9, 2026 1-3pm**  
**Listen to: National Public Radio (NPR)**  
**1A Program: "In Good Health: Could Parkinson's disease be preventable?"**

Please join us at the McDowell Senior Center to help maintain your quality of life. All adults with Parkinson's or Parkinsonism and their caregivers are welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

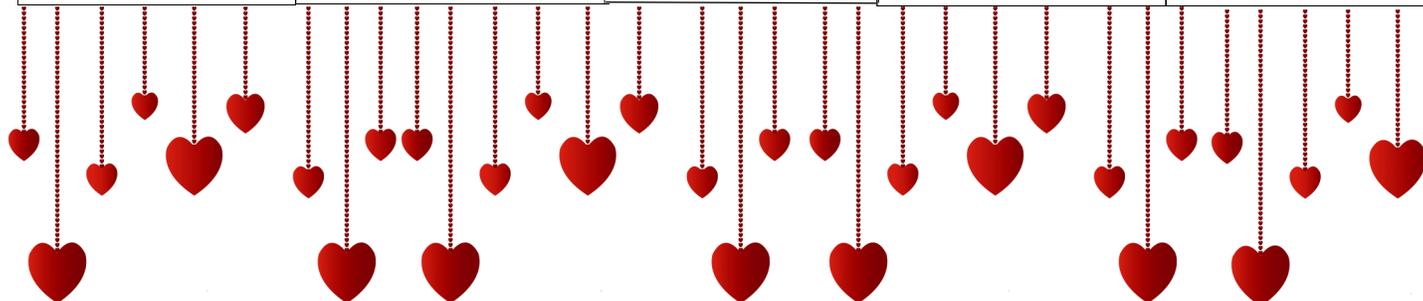
These meetings are social gatherings of conversations with the presenters and persons that have Parkinson's Disease and their caregivers.

**Meals Cancellations call 659-0821**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p><b><u>Dining Room Notice</u></b></p> <p>In order to be sure you will be served lunch, please register by 12:00 pm the day before you want to eat.</p> <p><b>Thank you.</b></p>	<p><u>Nutrition Site</u>  <u>Beverages</u></p> <p>Whole / Skim Milk  Tea  Coffee</p> 	<p><b>Menu items are subject to change due to availability</b></p> <p>* Cong.- Congregate  * HDM - Home Delivered Meals</p>		
2 Sante Fe Chicken Fillet w/ Salsa & Monterey Jack Cheese Glazed Carrots Fruit Cup Baby Bakers Biscuit	3 Baked Sliced Turkey w/Gravy Broccoli Florets Rice Roll Jello w/Fruit	4 Country Style Steak w/Gravy Tossed Salad Creamed Potatoes Biscuit Banana	5 Pork Loin Steamed Cabbage Cold Spiced Applesauce Black Eyed Peas Cornbread Cake	6 Breaded Chicken Breast Fillet Sandwich Potato Soup- *Cong. Tater Tots- *HDM Cold Sliced Peaches
9 Baked Parmesan Chicken Breast Peas Noodles Garlic Biscuit Baked Sliced Apples	10 Pinto Beans Turnip Greens Diced Potatoes Cornbread Fruit Cup	11 Chicken Tenders Tossed Salad Baby Lima Beans Roll Jello	12 Meatloaf w/Gravy Fried Okra Creamed Potatoes Biscuit Iced Cake	13 Chicken Alfredo Broccoli Noodles Cheese Biscuit Cookie
16 Chicken Pot Pie Fresh Apple Biscuit Peanut Butter Cookie	17 Salisbury Steak w/Gravy California Blend Rice Roll Diced Pears	18 BBQ Pork Cole Slaw Whole Kernal Corn Hush Puppies Applesauce	19 Orange Chicken Asian Vegetables Mandarin Oranges Asian Rice Egg Roll	20 Cheeseburger Apple French Fries Fig Newton
23 Chicken Stew w/Mixed Vegetables Harvard Beets Rice Biscuit Cold Pears	24 Taco Pie w/Taco Meat, Cheddar Cheese, Lettuce, & Tomatoes Refried Beans Tortilla Chips Fruit Cocktail	25 Teriyaki Pork Asian Vegetables Tropical Fruit Rice Egg Roll Fortune Cookie	26 Oven Fried Fish Cole Slaw Fruit Juice Scalloped Potatoes Cornbread Cookie	27 Baked Macaroni & Cheese w/Hamburger Meat Cold Country Tomatoes Broccoli Spears Cornbread Cake

**FEBRUARY 2026**  
**MCDOWELL COUNTY SENIOR CENTER**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2	3	4	5	6
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00 Drum Circle	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance	9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise	10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 5:30-8:00 Valentine's Dance
9	10	11	12	13
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 10:30-11:30 Songs & Valentines 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00 Parkinson's Support Group	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:15-7:00 TAPS Care Group 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance	9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering <u>1:30-2:30 Vaya Health Training</u>	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:15 BINGO 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise	10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise
16	17	18	19	20
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00 Drum Circle	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance	9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise	9:30-11:30 Craft Class 9:30-11:30 Chair Exercise
23	24	25	26	27
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance	9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:15 BINGO 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-2:30 Dementia Support Group	10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 10:00-11:30 Variety Hour





# Webinar Schedule 2026 Eastern Region

## To Register:

Go to [Vayahealth.com/Calendar](http://Vayahealth.com/Calendar)  
Click on desired class to register.

## For More Information:

Email: [jeffrey.dula-brown@vayahealth.com](mailto:jeffrey.dula-brown@vayahealth.com)  
Or call: 828-225-2785 ext. 3346

Date	Time	Topic
February 13, 2026	10:00am-11:00am	Facing the Emotional Challenges of Chronic Illness
February 13, 2026	11:15am-12:15pm	Personality Disorders: Reaction to Interaction
February 17, 2026	1:30pm-2:30pm	Facing the Emotional Challenges of Chronic Illness
February 17, 2026	2:45pm-3:45pm	Personality Disorders: Reaction to Interaction
March 13, 2026	10:00am-11:00am	Brain Health in Aging
March 13, 2026	11:15am-12:15pm	Feeding the Mind: Nutrition in Dementia
March 17, 2026	1:30pm-2:30pm	Brain Health in Aging
March 17, 2026	2:45pm-3:45pm	Feeding the Mind: Nutrition in Dementia

# Vaya Health Trainings 2026 Eastern Region

**Open to the Public**



## Location:

**McDowell Senior Center**  
100 Spaulding Road, Marion, NC 28752  
**Held the 2nd Wednesday of each month**

## To Register:

Go to [Vayahealth.com/Calendar](http://Vayahealth.com/Calendar) or  
call the McDowell Senior Center at **828-659-0821**

Vaya Health's HEART serves: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Johnston, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rowan, Swain, Transylvania, Wake, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties.

Date	Time	Date	Time
Feb 11	(1:30pm-2:30pm)	Mar 11	(1:30pm-2:30pm)
<p><b>Personality Disorders: Reaction to Interaction</b></p> <p>Supporting an older adult with a personality disorder can be challenging. This training looks at specific personality disorders, what to expect, and treatment options. Also shared are tips used to make interactions smoother and more effective.</p>		<p><b>Brain Health in Aging</b></p> <p>With focus on maintaining brain health as we age, participants will learn about normal cognitive aging, risk factors for decline, and strategies to support brain health through lifestyle choices like nutrition, exercise, and mental stimulation. Practical tips for caregivers and healthcare professionals will be provided to enhance the cognitive well-being of older adults.</p>	

*Hosted by the McDowell Senior Center in partnership with the Vaya Health Education and Aging Resource Team. All HEART trainings are free and accredited through the NC Division of Health Service Regulation which awards one contact hour for each hour of training.*

# OLD FORT NUTRITION SITE

LOCATED AT 909 EAST MAIN ST., OLD FORT, NC 28762

**Phone: 668-4867 FEBRUARY 2026**

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY



Line Dancing

## New Line Dance Class

**at the AC Bud Hogan Community Center**

**Wednesdays at 2:00 Instructor: Kay Cline**

**Beginners Welcome!**

**Questions? Call 828-668-4867**

<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun &amp; Games with Carol</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p>8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun &amp; Games with Carol</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">12</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">13</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">16</p> <p>8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">17</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun &amp; Games with Carol</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">18</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">19</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">20</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">23</p> <p>8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">24</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun &amp; Games with Carol</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">25</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">26</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">27</p> <p>8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises</p>



## VETERAN NEWS AND NOTES

The VA is **no longer automatically mailing out Form 1095-B** starting in 2026; Veterans must now **access it online via their [VA.gov account](https://www.va.gov) or request a paper copy** by calling 877-222-VETS (8387) because of Affordable Care Act (ACA) changes, though it's not needed for federal taxes, only potentially for state filing.

### How to Get Your 1095-B:

1. **Online (Recommended):** Log in to your VA.gov account to download a copy electronically.
2. **By Phone:** Call the VA at 877-222-VETS (8387) to request a paper copy be mailed.

The VA is proposing changes on how it rates tinnitus, moving away from a standalone 10% rating to evaluating it as a symptom of another condition like hearing loss or TBI; existing ratings are protected, but new claims for tinnitus alone may be denied unless linked to another service-connected issue, with a 10% rating only possible if hearing loss is non-compensable (0%). Veterans with existing ratings are grandfathered in, but new filers should claim tinnitus with hearing loss or other related conditions quickly, as the separate rating is being eliminated.

Veterans may qualify for Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU) if their combined service-connected disabilities prevent gainful employment.

To qualify, veterans generally need:

- One disability rated at 40% or higher, or

- Multiple disabilities with a combined rating of 70% or more.

Pain medications can mask your true functional limitations, but the VA must rate your disability based on your *unmedicated* condition if the diagnostic code doesn't mention medication, meaning you should get a higher rating reflecting loss of motion, weakness, or fatigue when meds aren't working or during flares. Document flares, unmedicated symptoms, and medication side effects to show the full impact on daily life and work, as these can also form separate claims, like for PTSD meds causing anxiety or other issues, affecting your ability to maintain substantially gainful employment.



### Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Ends March 31

From January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026, if you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan or switch to Original Medicare (and join a separate Medicare drug plan) once during this time. Your coverage will start the first day of the month after you ask to join the plan.

### What can I do?

- If you are in a Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage), you can switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage).
- You can drop your Medicare Advantage Plan and return to Original Medicare. You will

also be able to join a separate Medicare drug plan.

### What can't I do?

- Switch from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan.
- Join a Medicare drug plan if you are in Original Medicare.
- Switch from one Medicare drug plan to another if you are in Original Medicare.

**Note:** You can only switch plans once during this period.

If you need assistance changing your Medicare Advantage Plan during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment, you can find help locally at the McDowell Senior Center in Marion or the A.C. Bud Hogan Community Center in Old Fort. We request that you fill out and return a SHIIP Medicare Program Assistance & Information Contact Form available at the reception desk at both sites and our SHIIP counselors will contact you for an appointment.

You can also get help from North Carolina SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program, by calling 1-855-408-1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Additionally, visit [www.medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) and login into your Medicare account to compare your current coverage with all of the options available in your area and you can enroll in a new Medicare Advantage Plan or switch to a stand-alone drug plan if you decide to make a change.

HAPPY



BIRTHDAY

**MARION**

- Mary Drayton 5
- Donna Stevens 5
- Dale Nelson 7
- Emma McKinney 9
- Carolyn Weant 9
- Mary Guier 11
- Patricia Lawing 11
- Patricia Arrowood 14
- Ned Gouge 17

**Robyn Creegan 21**

- Robin Jordan 21
- Jack Smith 21
- April Alters 23
- William Hitt 23
- Marie Ledford 25
- Dora Lewis 28
- Judy Randall 28
- Patricia Willoughby 28

**OLD FORT**

- Mary Blackwelder 9
- Joe Stroud 13
- Mary Duckett 17



# 2026 McDowell County Senior Games



## Early Bird Breakfast

March 6th 8:30am-9:30am

(Breakfast is for registering Senior Games participants)

Sign-Up for Breakfast at  
The Senior Center - (828)659-0821

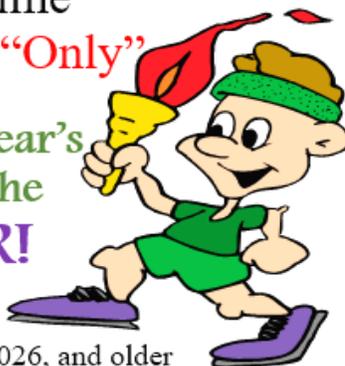
### Early Bird Registration Dates

March 6th - 13th

### Registration Time

9:00am - 2:30pm "Only"

Let's Make this Year's  
Senior Games the  
**BEST EVER!**



- Adults who are turning 50 by December 31, 2026, and older
- Participants must register by 2:30 pm on March 13th to get the early bird price of \$10.00
- After March 13th registration fee will be \$12.00 (*Deadline to register is April 2nd*)
- Half Price Registration Fee for New Participants to Senior Games, (must see Brenda Monosso for this fee)
- Please tell your friends, neighbors, and relatives. Our goal this year is to have 125+ participants registered for McDowell County Senior Games.

Deadline to register for

**McDowell Senior Games April 2nd, 2026**

## MCDOWELL COUNTY SENIOR CENTER

100 Spaulding Road  
Marion N.C. 28752

Phone: 828-659-0821

**Weyland Prebor, Director**

### FOCUS

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Cathy Laws

Old Fort Reporters:  
Cheryl Woody  
Carey Woody

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WEB:

www.mcdowellcountyseniorcenter.org

FAX: 828-652-8723



Scan this QR code with a scan reader on a phone or tablet to instantly get to the McDowell County Senior Center website.

## Let's Get Crafty

with Teresa

No supplies needed

February 20th

9:30am-11:30am



Space is limited to the first 12 people to sign up at the Front Desk.

For more information see Brenda Monosso.

### Trivia Answers:

1. Cloche



2. Dorothy Gale,  
The Wizard of Oz



### Guess the Definition Answer

3. dye deeply