

Mat-Su Senior Chatter

December 2021

Palmer Senior Citizens Center dba Mat-Su Senior Services
1132 South Chugach Street, Palmer, Alaska 99645
Phone (907) 745-5454 Fax (907) 746-5173

Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Core Values

Respect • Trust • Independence • Security • Compassion • Unity



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Special Holidays

We're thinking of you this time of year,
Wishing you happiness, joy, and cheer.
May all your days be warm and bright,
And your nights enhanced by holiday light.

Enjoy your delectable holiday foods,
As parties and gifts create holiday moods.
Favorite people play a meaningful part,
While treasured rituals warm your heart.

You are special to us in many ways,
So we wish you Happy Holidays!

By Joanna Fuchs

Palmer Senior Citizens Center dba Mat-Su Senior Services

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Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm

Interim Chief Executive Officer: Fred Traber
For Information about the below services,
please call: 745-5454

CONGREGATE MEALS: Served Monday through Friday 11:30am to 12:30pm at Center.

HOME DELIVERED MEALS: Call-in by 9:00am, Monday - Friday.

ADULT DAY SERVICES: Monday thru Friday 7:30am to 4:00pm.

CHORE & RESPITE SERVICES

NOTARY SERVICE: Traveling notary available.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: Please call Jackie at 761-5045

SENIOR HOUSING CHUGACH AND COLONY ESTATES: Senior Apartments. Call 761-5001 for more information.

FACILITY RENTAL AND CATERING AVAILABLE

TRANSPORTATION:

For medical trip in Palmer or Wasilla, call ahead for an appointment– one week notice is preferred.

VOLUNTARY DONATIONS ARE ACCEPTED
FOR ALL SERVICES

SUGGESTED DONATIONS – PER PERSON/SENIORS AGE 60+

CONGREGATE MEALS:\$ 5.00

HOME-DELIVERED MEALS:.....\$ 6.50

TRANSPORTATION:

Palmer, round trip.....\$ 5.00

Wasilla, one way.....\$ 8.00

MEMBER OF UNITED WAY OF MAT-SU,
FOOD BANK OF ALASKA, COALITION OF MAT-SU SENIOR CENTERS,
AND ACOA

Funding for this Newsletter was provided in part by:

DIVISION OF SENIORS AND DISABILITIES SERVICES.



CORE PURPOSE

Seniors Quality of Life

CORE VALUES

Respect • Trust • Independence • Security

Compassion • Unity

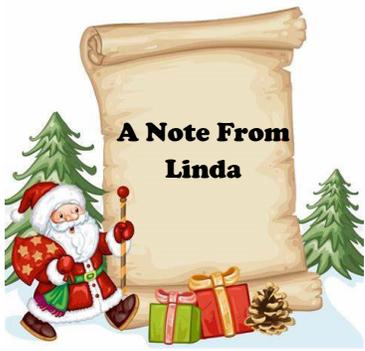
MISSION STATEMENT

MAT-SU SENIOR SERVICES primary mission is to promote honor, dignity, security, and independence for older Alaskans and to assist them in maintaining meaningful, quality lives. Eligibility includes older Alaskans, individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease or Related Disorders and anyone of any age on the Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver Program. Our Core Purpose is accomplished through programs including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Congregate Meals** providing nutritious meals and socialization in a congregate setting;
- **Home Delivered Meals** providing nutritious meals at home;
- **Transportation** to/from medical appointments,
- **Family Caregivers Support** providing support for the family caregiver;
- **Adult Day Services** a day program for eligible individuals;
- **Chore** assist individuals in maintaining their home;
- **Respite** provides family caregiver a much needed break;
- **Information and Referral** helping seniors reach needed services;
- **Outreach** for those unable to get to the Center;
- **Colony Estates and Chugach Estates Senior Housing** for individuals 55 years and older;
- **Activities** which include Card & Board Games, Bingo, AARP driving courses, Classes, Bible Studies, Veterans’/First Responders Circle, etc.;

DEPARTMENT MANAGERS

Interim CEO.....Fred Traber
Chief Operating Officer.....Beth Westland
Human ResourcesBeth Westland & Focus Solutions
Chief Financial OfficerAmanda Watson
Adult Day Services Manager..... Christopher Koops
Chore & Respite Manager.....Lisa Mecham
Temp. Kitchen Manager.....Gayle Wagner-Carlson



Dear Members,

The end of a year seems for so long to be very far away and then all of a sudden here it is with dark cold days filled with traditions and family and friends celebrating. For some it means travel and for others there will be visitors. Memories will be shared and new memories will be made.

In recent weeks I have been in discussions with family, friends and community leaders who all agree that the last 20 months or so have produced new feelings regarding the day to day activities as well as challenges to face regarding any traditional activities, changes that we have accepted as part of heralding the second holiday season of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us will no doubt reflect on how different this winter is from the last—largely because of widespread, vaccines and booster shots. But although things are more normal than they've been in a while, much is still the same, including headlines about safety worries and mask mandates, and reports of case numbers while decreasing for our area, they are still at the high alert level.

Despite the pandemic I urge all of you to find ways to fulfill your traditional values and new activities for the month of December and to face any challenges this pandemic brings to your door with cheer and optimism that the season of wonderment will still fill your lives and hearts with peace and goodwill.

Please read the interim CEO's page for not only for the great summary of the statistical values for the pandemic especially for our area of the state but please note that not only there are projects for the New Year but that funding has been requested and in some cases already secured for those projects. Two very large projects that will make a great difference for those we serve.

The Board of Director's has faced a great number of changes in just the last three months but we are adjusting for the tasks ahead of us in Board Development for the coming calendar year. Many of us have tackled these changes with gusto and look forward to the outcome of having a Board that has had the advantage of the development process. And fingers crossed the process of finding a new CEO is on schedule.

I am wishing and praying that each and every one of you will experience the warmth of a holiday season that is merry and bright.

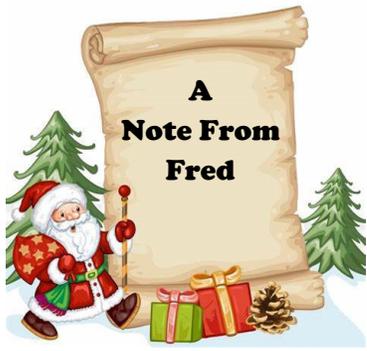
Linda A. Combs, Board President



Thank You for Supporting Mat-Su Senior Services!

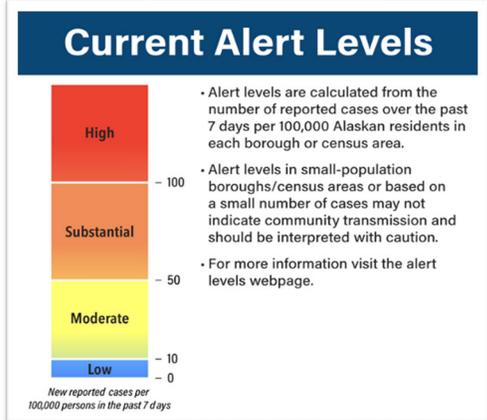
Support Mat-Su Senior Services by donating at www.matsuseniors.com





Wow! We can tell that we're approaching the typical holiday season. Things are busy. Let me tell you what we're up to:

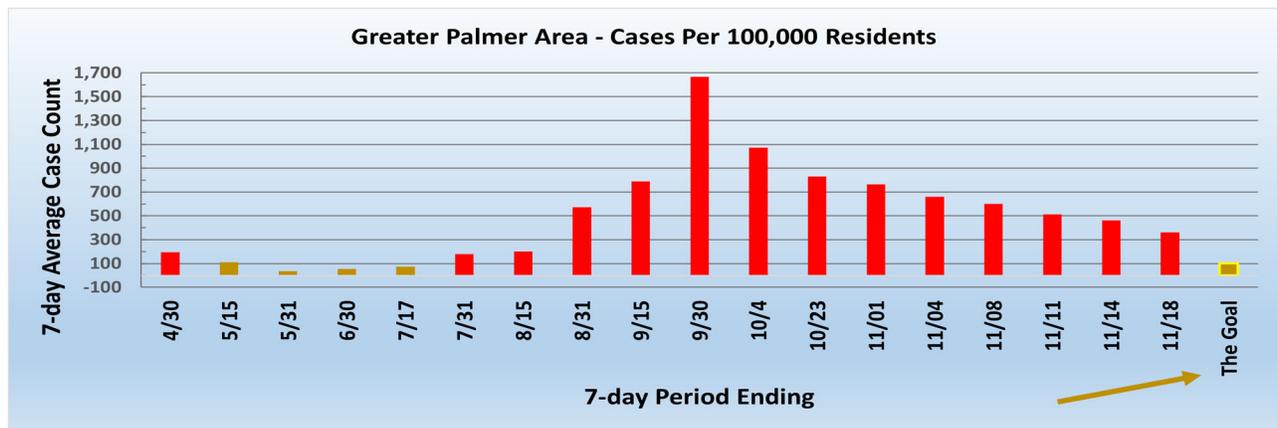
1. We're still not able to offer congregational activities. The number of Covid cases makes it *unsafe*. We are committed to the health and well-being of everyone receiving our services and our staff and will continue to offer as many of our services as we can while ensuring the safety of all involved.



As you can see below, the case counts for the Greater Palmer Area *are improving*. We continue to monitor the number of new cases daily using the data provided by the State of Alaska.

The chart below shows the average number of Covid cases per 100,000 residents since April 15, 2021. When we paused our congregational meals and activities in early October, we had just experienced the highest level of cases of all in 2021. If the community continues taking precautions and current trends continue, we'll soon be able to open to our in-person lunches, crafts, exercise, and other events. That will come when we are below the threshold of 100 cases per 100,000 residents – moving from the High to the Substantial Level where we were in May, June, and July.

Please be patient and stay safe.



But wait – There's more!

2. Grant Request to Alaska Community Foundation. We want to improve how we do business: Prepare and deliver meals 5 times per week to meet the 70% increase in demand; provide additional assisted transportation services for Seniors; provide additional Chore and Respite services to meet the growing demand by housebound Seniors; funding for the additional cost of recruiting, retention and Human Resources assistance due to staff shortages; cover loss of revenue due to Covid restrictions. The total requested is \$451,000.

3. Grant Request through Mat-Su Borough. Funds will provide facilities upgrades to the Colony housing complex, including replacing the fire suppression system, installing security cameras, remodeling individual units, parking lot repaving, and common area upgrades. The total requested is \$850,000.

4. Key personnel search efforts. With the assistance of a respected nationwide search firm, we have a local search committee in place, actively recruiting two key managers: Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer. Our Search Committee includes a Board member, an Agency employee, a local business person, Interim CEO, and a long-time consultant to our Agency. The search takes place around Covid obstacles and the upcoming holidays, with a target completion of February 1 for both positions.



Officers

President Linda Combs
Vice-President Sally Weiland
Treasurer Jennifer McCrary
Secretary Elda McCraw



Members

Catherine Hall
Dora Wheeler
Phyllis Moore
Vacant
Vacant

Coming Soon!
2022 Membership Drive!

907-745-5454

Dec. Membership Meeting:
December the 8th at 11:30am*

*If Center is Open



Your Mental Health This Holiday and Beyond: 4 Steps to Combat Loneliness in Seniors

December 15, 2016

National Counsel on Aging

It's December, and the holiday season is in full swing. It's the time of year for good food, and good friends and family—at least for most of us. But for many others the holiday season can remind them of just how lonely they are.

The U.S. Census estimates that as many as 28% of adults aged 65+ lived alone in 2010, but a person doesn't have to live alone to feel lonely. Loneliness can affect anyone who doesn't feel meaningful connections with other people.

Loneliness is more than an emotional issue; it has real implications for physical and mental health. Recent research has shown that feeling lonely or being isolated affects mortality in a similar way to that of a smoking habit of 15 cigarettes per day, and has more of an impact on mortality than other risk factors, like obesity and sedentary lifestyle.

A 2010 Survey on Loneliness from the AARP indicated that over half of people who had been diagnosed with anxiety, depression or another mood disorder reported being lonely. Furthermore, people who are lonely are more prone to depression and at greater risk of cognitive decline.

The good news is, loneliness doesn't have to be an ongoing problem. Here are 4 tips to help combat loneliness and protect the mental health of an older loved one this holiday and beyond.



1. Make communication a priority

Some older adults go days without speaking to anyone at all, especially those who are in poor health or who have limited mobility or transportation options. Nothing beats an in-person visit, but if you can't see each other around the holidays, talking on the phone—or video chatting with Skype or Facetime if everyone has the technology—can make a world of difference. Make a point to reach out on or before the actual holiday so the older adult in your life doesn't feel as though they have been forgotten during this special time of year. Encourage other friends or family members to do the same.



Keep the communication going in the New Year by setting 15-30 minutes aside once a week to talk. Don't feel restricted to small talk. Ask for advice, or how it felt to live through certain experiences. Older adults have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share.

2. Encourage and facilitate social activities through local organizations

Places of faith, like churches, temples and mosques, are a great place for individuals of all ages to meet like-minded people and find opportunities for group activities. If your older loved one isn't religious, consider activities available through a local senior center. Offer to join them on their first trip to any new places to reduce anxiety and apprehension.

3. Explore hobbies and other areas of interest

Figure out what the older adult in your life likes to do to relax or as a hobby (this is also a great way to get gift ideas). If they don't currently have any hobbies, ask if there is one they used to have that they would like to get back into or something new they would like to try. Odds are that other people share that interest and there are opportunities for socializing around it. Even seemingly solitary hobbies can become social. Avid readers can join book clubs; people who like to quilt or knit can join sewing or knitting circles.



If an older adult wants to try a new hobby, adult education classes are great places to meet other people while learning skills. Alternatively, if an older adult is exceptionally skilled at a craft, they may be able to teach it to others.

4. Identify opportunities to combat loneliness at any time

For those times between visits, calls, organizational activities and hobbies when loneliness can strike, determine some options that your older loved one can take advantage of at any time of day. Mental Health America (MHA) has a support community that is full of individuals who are online day and night looking to communicate and support one another, and is a great option for the internet savvy older adult. Older adults who prefer talking on the phone can call The Friendship Line at 1-800-971-0016. The Friendship Line is available 24/7 for adults aged 60+ to offer a caring ear and friendly conversation, and it also offers outreach services.

When these steps don't do the trick

If you have taken steps to address loneliness, but still find that the older adult in your life is withdrawn and in low spirits, they may be showing signs of depression. MHA has a free, anonymous and confidential depression screener online at MHAScreening.org. Screening is the first step to determining if professional help may be needed to address a mental health condition.



The Colony Christmas Arts & Crafts Bazaar will add an additional venue in 2021 at Mat-Su Senior Services! This Fair will be open Saturday, December 11th, from 10:00am-6:00pm. Vendors registration will be open on October 1st, 2021. Apply online at www.palmerchamber.org/colonychristmas! This webpage will be the hub for all official information on Colony Christmas 2021. Currently, a Vendor Handbook is available for anyone who would like to review the Vendor requirements and pricing. A current City of Palmer is required for this event. For additional questions, please contact the Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce at 907-745-2880 or info@palmerchamber.org.



Come join the festivities at Colony Christmas!

December Activities

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Activities Coordinator Jackie 907-761-5045		1 6 to 8 pm Estate Planning	2	3
		6	7 10:15am Survival Spanish	8 9:30 to 11:30 am Estate Planning 2pm Holiday Wreath
13	14 10:15am Survival Spanish 2 pm DIY String Ornaments	15	16 9:30 to 11:30 am Estate Planning	17 2 pm Candle Holder Mod Podge
20 2 pm DIY Gnome	21 10:15am Survival Spanish	22	Center Closed Merry Christmas	
27	28 10:15am Survival Spanish	29 2 pm DIY Snow Scene	30	31 Center Closed Happy New Year

Who Can attend: Anyone 60 or above. Cost: Free unless otherwise noted.

December Activities

Holiday Wreath Instructor: Jackie 907-761-5045

Description: We will be making some holiday wreaths. In making these wreaths you will get more into the spirit of the cozy winter months. Doing a DIY (Do It Yourself) is a great way to distract yourself and drown out the noise around you. Plus it is always good look at a finished project that you did on your own. If you are looking for more of a social interaction you are more than welcome to join us over zoom on Wednesday December 8th at 2 pm. Each to-go bag will include supplies for the Holiday Wreath.

Estate Planning: Instructor: Colleen McClurg 907-761-5045

Description: Everyone will be learning about the importance of estate planning and how to get it done the right way. Everyone will also be able to have their questions answered by someone about estate planning. All in all estate planning is making a plan in advance, naming the people or organizations you want to receive the things you own after you pass away, and taking steps now to make carrying out your plan as easy as possible later. Come and join us on Wednesday December 1st from 6 to 8 pm. Wednesday December 8th from 9:30 to 11:30 am. Thursday December 16th from 9:30 to 11:30 am. Contact Jackie to get all the paperwork needed for the class.

DIY String Ornaments: Instructor: Jackie 907-761-5045

Cost: None Who Can attend: Anyone 60 or above.

Description: During this activity we will be getting balloons and wrapping/gluing yarn around them to make an ornament. Once the glue is dry we will be popping the balloons. It will be in a shape of a ball and makes for a great holiday decoration for the house. The supplies will be given out with instructions on how to do it on your own and a YouTube link will be provided for those visual learners. If you are looking for more of a social interaction you are more than welcome to join us over zoom on Tuesday December 14th at 2 pm. Contact Jackie to get on the list for the to-go supplies.

Candle Holder Mod Podge: Instructor: Jackie 907-761-5045

Description: Mod Podge is a decoupage medium. It is a glue, sealer, and finish designed for craft and art projects. We will be making our own candle holders using simple supplies. The supplies consist of a napkin, a candle holder, and some mod podge. The supplies will be given out with instructions on how to do it on your own and a YouTube link will be provided for those visual learners. If you are looking for more of a social interaction you are more than welcome to join us over zoom on Friday December 17th at 2 pm. Contact Jackie to get on the list for the to-go supplies.

DIY Gnome Instructor: Jackie 907-761-5045

Description: Making these cute gnomes will bring joy into your life of how cute they look. Plus it is great for decoration. A gnome is a figurine of a small humanoid creature, typically wearing a tall pointy hat and serves as a decoration. The supplies will be given out with instructions on how to do it on your own and a YouTube link will be provided for those visual learners. If you are looking for more of a social interaction you are more than welcome to join us over zoom on Monday December 20th at 2 pm. Contact Jackie to get on the list for the to-go supplies.

DIY Snow Scene Instructor: Jackie 907-761-5045

Description: Here we will be making our winter wonderland with some simple and cute supplies. It is the perfect decoration with the snow coming our way to bring some warmth and joy. It will allow you to focus, plan, work with your hands, and enjoy the empowering feeling of creating a wonderland on your own. The supplies will be given out with instructions on how to do it on your own and a YouTube link will be provided for those visual learners. If you are looking for more of a social interaction you are more than welcome to join us over zoom on Monday December 29th at 2 pm. Contact Jackie to get on the list for the to-go supplies.

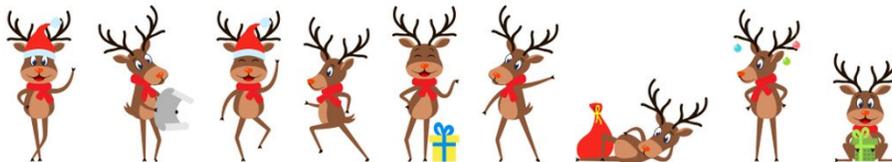


Let the Gift Shop Make Your Christmas Merry

As we mentioned last month, being closed does NOT make it impossible to take advantage of all the great Christmas possibilities the gift shop has to offer. As you have been waiting in line to pick up your Grab and Go lunch, you may have noticed that the lights are on in the gift shop. We're doing that so that you can see into the store. We have preparing weekly displays of all our newest and best giftables complete with prices so that you can purchase all your special gifts at senior center prices. Simply call the Center, ask to be transferred to the gift shop and leave us a message to call you. It's ok if you just have a question or need clarification. You are NOT obligated to purchase anything. We will call you back and give you the kind of friendly service you have come to expect from us.

For some, seeing each week's new display in the front of the store is not enough. There is a need to get a better view of small, folded or semi-hidden items, to see that perfect gift tucked away on a shelf in the back of the store, or to simply browse, letting the merchandise speak for itself. We can make that happen. You simply need to call us. We will return your call and work with you. We are so very excited about all of our new merchandise; we want to share it with you.

We realize that all activities at the Center from eating to crafting and shopping have been *covidized*. With that in mind, please let us assist you in making this a memorable holiday. A very merry and meaningful Christmas from all of us to all of you!



Would you like a customized shopping experience?

Would you like to shop as a "group" from the comfort of your own homes?

Call 907-761-5043 to schedule a Zoom Shopping trip.

If you come in for Grab-N-Go lunches you can browse items from the line. If you see something that you like you can call 907-761-5043 to order.

Word Find

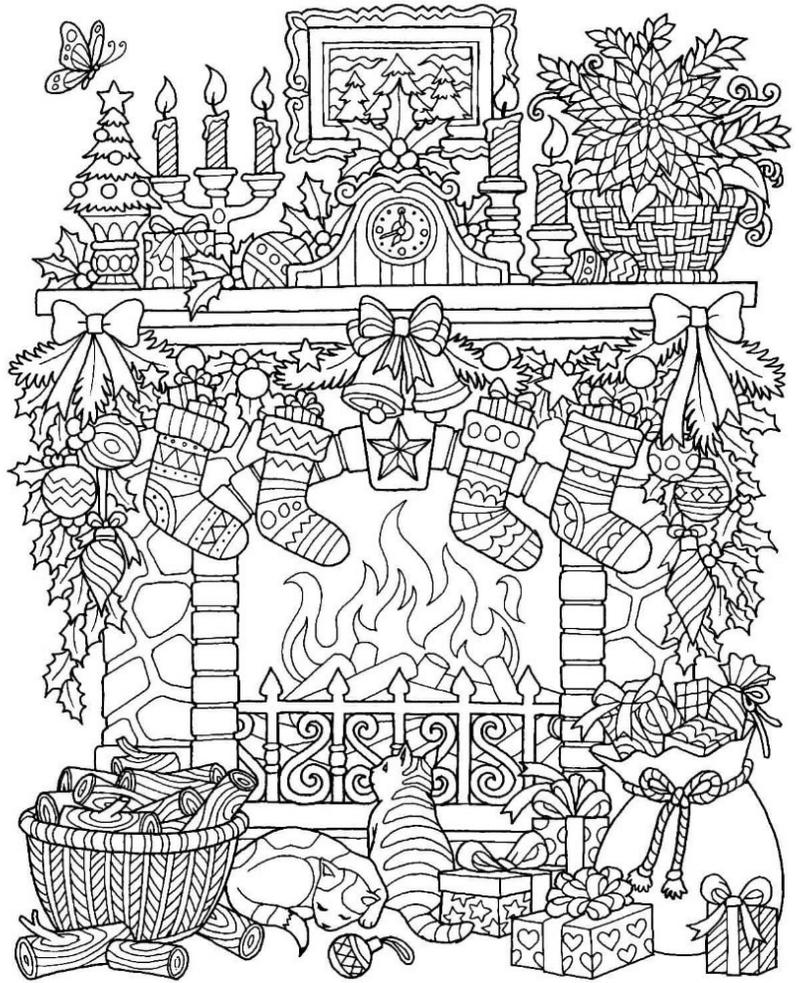
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- MEMORIES
- ELF
- REINDEER
- TREE
- RULDOPH
- FAMILY
- TWINKLE
- ANGEL
- FRIENDS
- PRESENT
- SANTA
- LIGHTS
- SLEIGH
- GIFT
- TRAIN



Did You Know....

Coloring has the ability to relax the fear center of your brain, the amygdala. It induces the same state as meditating by reducing the thoughts of a restless mind. This generates mindfulness and quietness, which allows your mind to get some rest after a long day at work.



		3						
4		9				6	5	
8				2				
						9		
			7	4			6	2
1		2				7		5
	8	1		7		5	9	4
		5	8	1	2			
		7			4	8	2	

Senior Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares so each row, column and 3 by 3 square has all the numbers from 1-9



Answers for both games on Page 15

December Menu

Menu is Subject to Change

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
<p>Grab N' Go Meals available 12 to 12:45 pm Monday through Friday. On Fish & Liver days, there is an alternative choice.</p> <p>Fish, unless otherwise noted is wild caught.</p>		<p>1 Chili Cauliflower Dessert</p>	<p>2 Chicken Fried Steak Mashed potato w/ gravy Capri Blend Dessert</p>	<p>3 Cat Fish Shoe String FF Carrots Dessert</p>
<p>6 Chicken Patty Rice Mixed Vegetable Dessert</p>	<p>7 BBQ Pork Scalloped Potato San Francisco Blend Dessert</p>	<p>8 Beef Roast Mashed potato W/ gravy Carrots Dessert</p>	<p>9 Ham Boiled Diner Winter Blend Dessert</p>	<p>10 Cod Fillets Batter Bites German Blend Dessert</p>
<p>13 Meatloaf Mashed Potato w/ Gravy Green Beans Dessert</p>	<p>14 Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce Cauliflower Dessert</p>	<p>15 Oven Baked Chicken Rice Capri Blend Dessert</p>	<p>16 Ham Scalloped potato Prince William Blend Dessert</p>	<p>17 Guinness Battered Cod French Fries Corn</p>
<p>20 Pork Patty Mashed Potato 5 way Mixed Vegeta- ble Dessert</p>	<p>21 Chicken Ala King Rice Peas & Carrots Dessert</p>	<p>22 Turkey Roast Stuffing Broccoli Dessert</p>	<p>23 Center Closed Merry Christmas</p>	
<p>27 Hot Dog Sauerkraut Brussel Sprouts Dessert</p>	<p>28 Popcorn Chicken French fries Green Beans Dessert</p>	<p>29 Pork Chow mien Rice Cauliflower Dessert</p>	<p>30 Hamburger Stroganoff German Blend Dessert</p>	<p>31 Center Closed Happy New Year</p>

Until further notice salads will not be provided with Home-Delivered Meals.

Congregate Meals are suspended during the center closure.



The ADRC can help connect you with resources that you may need, such as food, transportation, in-home services and supports, and eligibility for programs that can help meet your needs.

Website: www.linksprc.org



Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska

Our mission is to "Support Alaskans affected by Alzheimer's disease, related dementias and other disabilities to ensure quality of life."

Address: 1750 Abbott Rd., Anchorage, Ak 99507

Website: www.alzalaska.org **Phone:** 907-561-3313 **Statewide:** 1-800-478-1080



The ACE Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides medical equipment and supplies to help people regain their mobility and independence through a lending closet.

Phone: 907-232-4848 acelendingcloset@gmail.com

Applications For You Available in the

Administration Office of Mat-Su Senior Services

Application For heating Assistance—State Of Alaska

akCanConnect– Alaska's Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program Application

Senior Benefits Program Application– State of Alaska

Application for Services– State of Alaska,

-Medicaid from the State of Alaska

-Chronic & Acute Medical Assistance from the State of Alaska

-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from the State of Alaska

-Temporary Assistance Program from the State of Alaska

-Adult Public Assistance from the State of Alaska



Ken Boze, Christine Cox, Linda Derflinger,
 Evangeline Dessert, Stephan Heitmeyer, Janet
 Kincaid, Patrick Lewis, Merle Petron, Phyllis Schley,
 Edward Sojka Jr., Belinda Cook, Yolinda Delano,
 Candace Kopperud, Linda Menar-Post, Stacy
 Newman, Jeannie Snodgrass, John Switzer, Verona
 Doyal, Jo Ehman, Betsy Hilderman, Shirley
 Whitmer, Cynthia Wansor, Cathy Bates, Cheryl
 Couch, Brenda George, Diane Lindors



Center Closed

Thursday & Friday, December 23rd and 24th

Merry Christmas

Friday, December 31st

Happy New Year

R	S	E	E	A	F	R	T	S	A	N	T	A
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7	1	3	4	5	6	2	8	9



Palmer Senior Citizens Center, Inc. dba

Mat-Su Senior Services

1132 S. Chugach St.

Palmer, AK 99645

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PALMER, ALASKA 99645
PERMIT #99

The Dreaded Christmas Fruitcake

By Kelly Roper

Oh fruitcake, oh fruitcake,
why are you heavy like a rock?
And why do people keep sending you to me?
I really wish they would stop.

Your texture is like rubber,
And your fruit is chewy like gum.
I think no one would give you as a gift,
If they'd ever eaten some.

I've tried re-gifting you,
But you just keep coming back.
If I have to look at you one more time,
I think my mind will crack.

I really hate to be wasteful,
And I don't like to act rash,
But I can't take it anymore,
You're going into the trash!