



Mercer Island SENIORS RISING Newsletter

December 2025

Dear Island Seniors,

The holiday season is seen as a time for family, traditions, and stories. However, for some seniors, holidays can bring a sense of isolation and depression due to loss of a loved one, limited mobility, or distance from family.

This holiday season, we encourage you to be intentional about supporting meaningful connections among Island seniors to help decrease isolation and increase community engagement. Here are some ideas:

- Call or plan a coffee date with a friend who may be alone.
- Invite a neighbor to join you for the MI [Community Holiday Party](#), [tree lighting](#) or [menorah lighting](#) festivities.
- Engage in a multi-generational conversation with seniors, grandkids or neighbor kids about favorite holiday traditions.

If you are a senior who is feeling isolated, reach out and ask for help. If you or a loved one needs support, contact a mental health counselors at YFS for help at (206) 275-7657 or call 9-8-8 for crisis support.

Derek Franklin
YFS Administrator



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Seniors Scene



Mercer Island volunteers are seen among the festive holiday decorations at the MI Thrift Shop. All proceeds from the Thrift Shop benefit YFS. Volunteers are always welcome!



The Giving Tree at the Thrift Shop offers opportunities for monetary donations to support the YFS Holiday Program, which provides families experiencing financial insecurity with gifts for kids and food for a holiday meal. Stop by today!

happy holidays

Parkinson's Disease: Symptoms, Seeking Care, Finding Support



by Dr. Marci
Nemhauser, PsyD,
[Northwest Parkinson's
Foundation](#)
206.946.6517

You have noticed that one of your hands is shaking a little sometimes. It's not something to worry about, is it? Then you notice that you are having some trouble walking and you seem to be more hunched over. And then you take a fall. This has caught your attention and you decide to call the doctor. Your primary doctor will probably refer you to a Movement Disorder Specialist or a General Neurologist. And so your journey begins.

For those diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, the experience is different for each

person. No two people look the same with the disease. There is a lot to learn and that is where Northwest Parkinson's Foundation (NWPf) comes in. We offer support groups for every member of the family. We offer exercise programs, art programs, singing and drumming, and chair yoga. Some of these are in-person and some are virtual.

The key to delaying the progression of the disease is to keep exercising and keep being social!

The NWPf (nwpf.org) is a resource and can provide an overview of medications and other treatments that you can access. Working with your doctor, your physical therapist, and your support system, your life can still be full, vibrant, and amazing!

The Real Risk of Depression

Isolation and deteriorating health can lead to depression in seniors. It is important to recognize that among all age groups, adults age 75 and older have the highest rates of suicide.

Suicide is preventable. Like other age groups, it is important to identify signs of suicide such as withdrawal, significant change in mood, or giving away important possessions. Even if a senior has some cognitive decline or dementia, these changes in behavior can be a sign.

Preventing suicide among seniors involves understanding some of the unique challenges such as understanding the nuances of dying by suicide, and knowing about safe storage of lethal means.

If you or a loved one needs support, contact a mental health counselors at YFS at (206) 275-7657 or call 9-8-8 for crisis support. Find more prevention resources at [UW Forefront](#).



Senior Safety on the Roads

For many seniors, driving a car can be an important factor in maintaining independence. Although age is not the sole indicator of one's driving ability, it is common for some skills needed for safe driving to deteriorate such as vision, reflexes, flexibility and hearing.



As we observe Older Driver Safety Awareness Week in December, it is important to assess your skills and seek additional practice or instruction if needed.

YFS Senior Services Specialist, Marjorie Carlson, shares these resources for seniors:

- If you are wondering about your driving capabilities, you can request a clinical driving skills assessment from an occupational therapist.

- Driving schools also offer in-car driving skill evaluations, which you could follow up with additional practice hours on specific skills or to gain confidence.
- The Washington State Department of Licensing offers accident prevention courses that help drivers 55 and older stay safe on the road and can earn you a discount on your car insurance. Visit dol.wa.gov and search on "Driver Safety"
- The [AAA Exchange](http://exchange.aaa.com) (exchange.aaa.com) offers a free comprehensive workbook titled "[Drivers 65 Plus: Check your Performance](#)"

Knowledge and self-awareness will help you make informed decisions about when to get behind the wheel to drive and when to seek other modes of transportation.

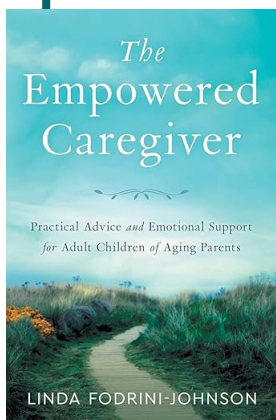
CAREGIVER Corner

Learn about caregiver support, connections, and resources.

Adult children often step in to become a source of support or the primary caregiver for their aging parents. Taking on the responsibility of caring for parents can be challenging and overwhelming as children seek the best care for their parents and help them make important life decisions.

Marjorie Carlson, YFS Senior Services Specialist, acknowledges that both seniors and their families can benefit from support. As a starting point for navigating a new role as caregiver, Carlson recommends the book, [The Empowered Caregiver](#) by Linda Fodrini-Johnson.

In addition to supporting Island seniors, Carlson is also available as a resource to adult children, family, and caregivers. If you are in need of support, please email marjorie.carlson@mercerisland.gov.



December Activities and Events

MI Youth and Family Services

www.mercerisland.gov/YFS

(206) 275-7657

- **12/9** [Living Alone Senior Group](#), **1:30-3:30PM**, Mercer Island Community and Event Center
- **12/17** [Caregiver Support Group](#), **10:30AM-Noon**, MICEC, (Fourth Wednesday of each month)

City of Mercer Island

www.mercerisland.gov/calendar

(206) 275-7657

- **12/4** [Holiday Tree Lighting](#), **5:30PM**, Mercerdale Park
- **12/6** [Holiday Makers Market](#), **10:00AM-3:00PM**, MICEC (in collaboration with MI Chamber of Commerce)
- **12/14** [Menorah Lighting](#), **5:00PM**, Mercerdale Park
- **12/19** [Community Holiday Party](#), **6:00-8:30PM**, MICEC
- **12/19** [Argosy Christmas Ship](#), **8:30-9:00PM**, Luther Burbank Park Beach
- **Monday-Friday** [Community Coffee](#), MICEC, **9:30-11:30AM** (No Coffee 12/22/25-1/4/26)
- **Wednesdays** [MI Thrift Shop Senior Discount Day](#), 20% off regular priced items (60+ with ID)
- **Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays** [Stay Active & Independent for Life \(SAIL\)](#) fitness program, **10:30-11:30AM** and **12:00-1:00PM**, MICEC (No Class 12/22/25-1/4/26)

*NOTE: MI Community & Event Center will be closed December 22 - January 4 for annual maintenance.

Please check the organization website or call to confirm program information. YFS has neither reviewed nor approved the program, personnel, activities or organizations included in the list.

Mercer Island Library

kcls.org (206) 236-3537

- **12/10** [Friends of the MI Library Book Sale](#), ongoing 12/10-12/14 during Library Hours
- **12/12** [2025-2026年度能源補助計劃 / 2025-2026 Energy Assistance Programs](#), **10:30AM-12:00PM**, Online program via Zoom
- **12/13** [The Dickens Carolers](#), **12:00-12:45PM**, repeats 12/14
- **12/16** [MI Library Book Club](#), **1:30-3:00PM**
- **12/17** [Gingerbread House Fun](#), **5:30-6:30PM**
- **12/20** [Tech Support for Older Adults](#), **3:00-4:30PM**
- **12/29** [Tech Support for Older Adults](#), **3:15-4:45PM**

Stroum Jewish Community Ctr.

sjcc.org (206) 232-7115

- **Ongoing**, [Mercer Crest Bridge Club](#) Lessons
- **Mondays** [Mahjong Mondays](#), **6:00-8:30PM** (Drop-in weekly & Beginner Classes monthly)
- **Monday-Friday**, [Aqua Fit](#), **9:00AM**
- **Tuesdays** [Senior Strong](#), **11:00 AM**
- **Wednesdays** [Chair Yoga](#), **11:00AM**
- **Thursdays** [Balance & Stability](#), **11:00AM**
- **12/16** [Intergenerational Hanukkah Celebration](#)
Free event - Everyone is welcome!

Other Activities & Organizations

- [Mary Wayte Pool](#)
- [Mercer Island Historical Society](#)
- [Mercer Island Sister City Foundation](#)
- [Mercer Island Visual Arts League](#)
- [Mercer Island Women's Club](#)
- [Old Friends Club](#)
- [OSHER](#) Lifelong Learning Institute at the UW