



# Mercer Island SENIORS RISING Newsletter

February 2026

Dear Island Seniors,

Welcome to the quarterly print edition of YFS's Seniors Rising newsletter and to another year of Mercer Island seniors thriving.

YFS looks forward to a busy year providing senior services and supporting the health of the Mercer Island senior community in general.

Thanks to the MIYFS Foundation Board for donating \$30,000 to underwrite many of our senior efforts in 2026 – this year will surely be a great one!

I invite you to explore this edition and learn more about dementia, how to deal with isolation, and to look ahead to the annual Senior Resource Fair.

On behalf of YFS and the City of Mercer Island, here's to a healthy and resilient 2026!

Derek Franklin  
YFS Administrator



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND  
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

## Seniors Scene



Mercer Island seniors and other residents participate in a free Open Art Studio session at the MI Community and Event Center. The next studio session will be held on February 13<sup>th</sup> from 10:00-11:30AM. No registration necessary.

Happy  
Valentine's  
Day

*To love oneself is the beginning  
of a life-long romance.*

Oscar Wilde

# Avoid Isolation

As we age, it can be easier to be stuck at home and feel isolated. Maybe you are not as mobile as before, transportation options are fewer, or, like many of us, using technology and social media to connect is just plain difficult.

Research shows there are many physical and mental health benefits to socializing and connecting with others. Here are few tips to help seniors stay connected and avoid isolation:

- Despite our own challenges, our grandkids all use technology to connect. Since youth are less likely to use email, learn how to use video chat and smart speakers to see and hear family and friends. Free tech support is available at the Mercer Island Library (see Calendar on page 7).
- Be open with your doctor about isolation and health habits that might be contributing to difficulty getting out. Consider the Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) fitness class at the MI Community and Event Center.



- Join a club or faith-based organizations that regularly holds gatherings that will motivate you to go out. Try a book club at the Mercer Island Library or Island Books, or join Mahjong Mondays at the Stroum Jewish Community Center (SJCC). If you are a caregiver of a loved one with dementia, the Old Friends Club at MI Presbyterian Church provides affordable respite care.
- Consider volunteering for a few hours each month. Getting out, engaging with others, and feeling purposeful can counter feelings of isolation. The MI Thrift Shop values our senior volunteers and welcomes new faces!

Keep in mind there are no “shoulds” about staying connected. YFS counselors remind seniors that everyone’s definition of connection is different and it is important to honor your own.

# Try Something New!

Here are some new activities to try in 2026 – meet people, try a new skill and have fun!

Be creative at the monthly **Open Art Studio** provided by the MI Recreation Division. Open Art Studio is focused on the learning and enjoyment of watercolor painting. The studio is a free drop-in art program offered one Friday per month from 10:00-11:30AM at the MI Community and Event Center. The next studio is on February 13. (See full schedule at [www.mercerisland.gov/parksrec/page/recreation-programs](http://www.mercerisland.gov/parksrec/page/recreation-programs)). No registration required. Participants are asked to bring your own watercolor paints and paper.

The **Mercer Island Visual Arts League** (MIVAL) is also offering a new line-up of programs. Join MIVAL Saturday, February 28 from 10:00AM-3:00PM for **Pastel Power with Jeff Olson**. Learn more and register at [mival.org/classes](http://mival.org/classes).

Are you craving the opportunity to continue learning? Join an **OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute lecture** at the MI Community and Event Center. The lectures are offered in tandem with the University of Washington. Come share intellectual interests in this program led by UW Faculty or community experts.

The next lecture is **Great Women Artists: 1500-Present** and begins February 23. Register at: [www.osher.uw.edu/programs](http://www.osher.uw.edu/programs)



*More programs and activities can be found on the Calendar on page 7.*

## Northwest Parkinson's Foundation

Have you ever wondered if a slight shake of your hand or a little stumble could be something to worry about? There is a great local resource right here in Mercer Island where you can talk with someone about your worries.

The **Northwest Parkinson's Foundation** (NWPF) office is located at 3010 77th Ave SE, Suite 101, Mercer Island. NWPF can provide education, information and support to anyone who is curious or worried about Parkinson's Disease. PNWF is open Monday through Friday from 9:00AM-3:00PM. Stop by or call Dr. Marci at 206.946.6517 to set up an appointment. More information at <https://nwpf.org/>

# Understanding Dementia

Islanders are living longer than ever before and enjoying life well into their 80s and 90s. However, even if your body can keep up, brains can become vulnerable to a number of symptoms from a variety of degenerative disorders.

When intellectual functioning is impaired beyond the typical slowing with age, it is collectively referred to as dementia. In addition to losing memory, people with dementia can have challenges with problem solving, difficulty regulating emotions and behaviors, challenges with balance and gait, and may experience a change in personality.

Some diseases associated with dementia are Alzheimer's disease, Lewy body dementia, and Huntington's disease.



Sometimes, reactions to medications can look like dementia if left untreated. It is very important to discuss all symptoms with your medical provider, as dementia is very complex and symptoms might be related to other treatable conditions. Dementia is not a normal part of the aging process. If you have concerns, seek support from your medical provider.

“Dementia is not a specific disease. It is a descriptive term for a collection of symptoms that can be caused by a number of disorders that affect the brain. People with dementia ...lose their ability to solve problems and maintain emotional control, and they may experience personality changes and behavioral problems, such as agitation, delusions, and hallucinations. While memory loss is a common symptom of dementia, memory loss by itself does not mean that a person has dementia. “

*Source: Dementia Society of America*

## RESOURCES:

Dementia Society of America [www.dementiasociety.org](http://www.dementiasociety.org)

Alzheimer's Association - Washington Chapter [www.alz.org/alzwa](http://www.alz.org/alzwa)



# Partner Spotlight

The MIYFS Foundation is the non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer board that exists to raise funds to support YFS services. We are fortunate to have this amazing group backing YFS's efforts to support youth, individuals, families, and seniors. This past year, MIYFS Foundations contributed almost 25% of the total YFS budget.

**Good news for seniors!** The MIYFS Foundation recently pledged a supplemental gift of \$30,000 to YFS specifically to support our senior programming in 2026. This generous gift will fund the Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) fitness class, YFS senior support groups, and the cost of maintaining this Seniors Rising newsletter. Support like this goes a long way in building momentum behind the YFS Seniors Rising effort.

The MIYFS Foundation is comprised of Island residents who volunteer because they believe in the work of YFS. They support the wellbeing of Mercer Island residents by providing assistance to our community's most vulnerable. The Foundation relies on generous donations from Island businesses and individuals.

The primary fundraiser for the MIYFS Foundation is the **Annual Fundraising Breakfast** scheduled for February 11, 2026 at the Mercer Island Community & Events Center. Now in its 24th year, this signature event has become a cherished part of Mercer Island's community calendar.



MIYFS Foundation donors help fund essential programs that support Islanders across their lifespan such as YFS mental health counselors in every MISD school, sliding-scale outpatient counseling at the YFS Luther Burbank office, and critical basic-needs services (mobile food market, rent assistance, employment support, senior services, and more.) These programs help children thrive, enable seniors to age in place, and support families in avoiding crisis.

Visit [www.miysf.org](http://www.miysf.org) to learn more, to register to attend, or donate if you're unable to join. Your generosity ensures that Mercer Island continues to care for its own today and for generations to come. ❤️





The City of Mercer Island Presents:

# SENIOR RESOURCE FAIR

Mark your calendar!

MARCH 7, 2026 | 10AM - 12PM

Mercer Island Community & Event Center



The Mercer Island Senior Resource Fair returns to the Mercer Island Community & Event Center this March!

A free event for Island seniors, their care partners, and families with information on staying active, health and safety, support and respite services, mental health care, volunteer opportunities, and social connections.

- Informational booths from local and regional senior resources
- Connect with experts in senior issues and aging
- Refreshments and seated social areas

Mercer Island Community & Event Center | 8236 SE 24th St.  
206.275.7609 | [miparks@mercerisland.gov](mailto:miparks@mercerisland.gov)

# February Activities and Events

## MI Youth and Family Services

[www.mercerisland.gov/YFS](http://www.mercerisland.gov/YFS)

(206) 275-7657

- **2/10** Living Alone Senior Group, **1:30-3:30PM**, Mercer Island Community and Event Center (Second Tuesday of each month)
- **2/25** Caregiver Support Group, **10:30AM-Noon**, MICEC (Fourth Wednesday of each month)

## City of Mercer Island

[www.mercerisland.gov/calendar](http://www.mercerisland.gov/calendar)

(206) 275-7657

- **Monday-Friday** Community Coffee, MICEC, **9:30-11:30AM**
- **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, **10:00-11:00AM and 11:30AM-12:30PM**, MICEC (*note new class times for 2026!*)
- **2/12** Park Restoration Event, Luther Burbank Caretaker Building, **12:00-2:00PM**

## Mercer Island Library

[kcls.org](http://kcls.org) (206) 236-3537

- **2/2** Tech Support for Older Adults, **3:15-4:45PM** (Every Monday)
- **2/7** SilverKite Community Arts: Line Dancing Across Genres, **12:00-1:00PM**
- **2/7** Tech Support for Older Adults, **3:00-4:30PM** (Every Saturday)
- **2/10** MI Library Book Club, **1:30-3:00PM**

## Island Books

<https://islandbooks.com> (206) 232-6920

- **2/19** Virtual Knitting Book Club, **6:00PM**, Zoom
- **2/24** Romance Book Club, **6:30PM**
- **2/26** Open Book Club, **7:30PM**

## Stroum Jewish Community Ctr.

[sjcc.org](http://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**
- **Fridays** Tai Chi, **10:30AM**
- **2/3** Tree of Life Paint & Sip, **6:00-8:00PM**
- **2/19** Sewcial Hour: Embroidery Clinic, **6:30-8:30PM**

## Other Activities & Organizations

- Mary Wayte Pool
- Mercer Island Historical Society
- Mercer Island Sister City Association
- Mercer Island Visual Arts League
- Mercer Island Women's Club
- Old Friends Club
- OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute at UW

*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.*



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND  
**YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES**

2040 84<sup>th</sup> Ave SE  
Mercer Island, WA 98040



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DIGITAL newsletter is emailed monthly.  
PRINTED newsletter is mailed quarterly (Feb, May, Aug, Nov)

Sign up to receive the digital and/or printed version.

**To subscribe online:** [www.mercerisland.gov/yfs/page/seniors-rising-newsletter](http://www.mercerisland.gov/yfs/page/seniors-rising-newsletter)

**To subscribe via USPS:** complete the form below and mail to  
YFS, 2040 84<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040

**To be removed from list:** [SeniorsRising@mercерisland.gov](mailto:SeniorsRising@mercерisland.gov) or call (206) 275-7657

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