



Mercer Island **SENIORS RISING** Newsletter

January 2026

Mercer Island Seniors,

As we welcome 2026, YFS is looking forward to continuing our Seniors Rising initiative, including programs such as:

- The Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) fitness class which helps seniors with movement, balance, and falls prevention.
- Senior group such as the Living Alone Group and Caregiver Support Group which provide opportunities for connection and community.
- YFS senior case management and mental health services providing behavioral health and support services to any Island senior.

Thank you to our community volunteers, City colleagues, MIYFS Foundation, YFS staff, and all the Island seniors who help us keep the Seniors Rising initiative strong.

Here's to another year of seniors growing, thriving, and connecting.

Derek Franklin
YFS Administrator



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Thank You



for supporting Mercer Island seniors!

The MIYFS Foundation is the non-profit volunteer board that exists to raise funds to support YFS services. We are excited to share that in late 2025, the MIYFS Foundation pledged an additional 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 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 initiative.

To get involved or learn more about the Foundation's upcoming annual fundraising breakfast event, go to their website: www.miyfs.org.

Welcome 2026!



As we welcome in a new year, it is the perfect time to pause, reflect, and set intentions for the year ahead. No matter the age, there is value in setting goals for yourself to identify what is important and to guide your daily activities. Here are some intentions for MI seniors to consider for 2026!

Health and Wellness

Your physical and mental well-being remain priorities at every stage of life. Consider:

- Establishing a regular wellness routine that includes movement you enjoy
- Scheduling preventive health appointments
- Improving sleep habits
- Trying new activities that challenge both body and mind

Social Connection and Community

Human connection is scientifically proven to enhance longevity and happiness. Consider:

- Reaching out to an old friend you've lost touch with
- Joining a new club or group that shares your interests
- Volunteering for a cause you care about

Personal Growth and Learning

It's never too late to learn something new or pursue a passion. Consider:

- Taking a class in art, music, or a subject that fascinates you
- Learning to use technology that keeps you connected to loved ones
- Reading books you've meant to explore

Life Transitions and Planning

Sometimes the new year is the right time to consider bigger life changes:

- Evaluating whether your current living situation still serves your needs
- Having important conversations with family about the future
- Organizing finances and important documents
- Reviewing your emergency plans to make sure you are prepared

Tips for Successful Goal Setting

1. **Start Small and Specific:** Rather than “get healthier,” try “walk for 15 minutes three times a week.”
2. **Make It Meaningful:** Choose goals that genuinely matter to you, not what you think you “should” do. Motivation is easier when connected to your values.
3. **Write It Down:** Studies show that writing goals makes you more likely to achieve them. Keep your list somewhere visible.
4. **Share With Others:** Tell a friend, family member, or neighbor about your goals. Having an accountability partner increases your chances of success.
5. **Build in Flexibility:** Life happens, and that's okay. If circumstances change, adjust your goals rather than abandoning them entirely.
6. **Celebrate Progress:** Acknowledge small wins along the way. Every step forward deserves recognition.

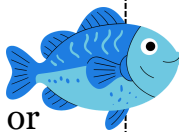
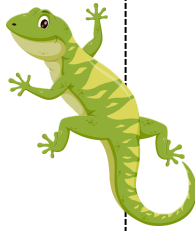
Here's to a new year of possibilities!

The Power of Pets

The unconditional love of a pet can bring joy and affection into one's life. Research has shown that having a pet brings many other positive benefits as well. In addition to being a powerful antidote to isolation and loneliness, companion animals for seniors can lower stress, lower blood pressure, increase physical activity, improve social interactions, and even slow cognitive decline.

Have you been considering a companion animal? If so, it is important to find a good match between the animal and owner. Here are some things to consider in the match:

- Energy level – Match the pet's energy level to yours. For example, an active senior might enjoy a small dog to accompany on walks, while someone with limited mobility may prefer a cat or fish.
- Size – Consider the size of animal that works best for your situation. Some larger dogs can be overpowering for seniors when playing or out walking.
- Hazards – Seniors with a condition that affects balance or mobility should avoid pets that might be a tripping hazard. A fish, bird, reptile, or hamster might be a good option to consider.
- Training – Older pets typically need less training and may be more calm.
- Living situation – If in an apartment or renting, are pets allowed? If you are considering a dog, is there yard space?



- Animal life expectancy – Keep in mind that animal life spans differ. A small dog or cat could live 15+ years and yet tortoises and larger birds, like parrots can live 35-60+ years. Imagine not only what works now, but what will work potentially through end of life.
- Budget – Some pets have higher expenses than others. Factor in food, veterinarian visits, and grooming.
- Lifestyle – For active seniors who enjoy traveling, some animals are a better fit than others. Dogs need a caretaker while their owner is away, however; cats and small mammals are lower maintenance.

If you're thinking about getting a pet, here are some options:

- Cats: Independent, quiet, and require less exercise; good for companionship.
- Small Dogs: Breeds like Shih Tzus and Yorkies are affectionate and manageable.
- Small Mammals (Guinea Pigs, Rabbits): Low maintenance, not a trip hazard, need small spaces, and can be cuddly.
- Fish & Birds: Provide calming presence without high physical demands.

To find the best fit, visit an animal shelter or spend time with a friend's pet.

Reach out to the YFS Senior Services Specialist, Marjorie Carlson (Marjorie.carlson@mercerisland.gov) to learn more. Resources are also available at www.kingcounty.gov/pets

January Activities and Events

MI Youth and Family Services

www.mercerisland.gov/YFS

(206) 275-7657

- **1/13 [Living Alone Senior Group](#), 1:30-3:30PM**, Mercer Island Community and Event Center (Second Tuesday of each month)
- **1/28 [Caregiver Support Group](#), 10:30AM-Noon**, MICEC (Mostly on the Fourth Wednesday of each month)

City of Mercer Island

www.mercerisland.gov/calendar

(206) 275-7600

- **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!)

Mercer Island Library

kcls.org (206) 236-3537

- **1/13 [MI Library Book Club](#), 1:30-3:00PM**
- **1/24 [Behind the Barbed Wire](#), 4:30-6:30PM**
- **1/5 [Tech Support for Older Adults](#), 3:15-4:45PM** (Every Monday except 1/19)
- **1/10 [Tech Support for Older Adults](#), 3:00-4:30PM** (Every Saturday)

Island Books

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

- **1/15 [Virtual Knitting Book Club](#), 6:00PM**, Zoom
- **1/27 [Romance Book Club](#), 6:30PM**
- **1/29 [Open Book Club](#), 7:30PM**

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**
- **1/13 [A Legacy of Courage: Lunch and Learn](#), 12:00-1:00PM**, SJCC

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 the 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.

