

NHA Resident Review



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF
NORTHWEST HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

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Tax Time!

Tax season is just around the corner and NHA would like to help you file quickly and easily. There are many places that provide online and in person help to file your state and federal taxes.

CASH Oregon is a nonprofit organization that supports free tax preparation and tax credit coverage in 32 counties of the state of Oregon at more than 140 tax sites. Check their website for locations: <http://cashoregon.org>

The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program offers free tax help to people who generally earn \$ 54,000 or less, people with disabilities and English-speaking taxpayers who need assistance preparing their own tax returns. Volunteers certified by the IRS provide free preparation of tax returns on basic income with electronic filing to qualified individuals. To find a VITA site near you, call 800-906-9887.

In addition to **VITA, the Elderly Tax Counseling (TCE)** program offers free tax assistance to all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 years of age or older, who specialize in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues for seniors only. . Volunteers certified by the IRS who provide tax advice are often retired people associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS. Call 888-227-7669

Elder Bullying

Bullying is a problem that has received widespread public attention. Bullying is not restricted to children and teens. It is also found among adults of all ages. Bullying has been known to occur in nearly every environment.

Bullying is defined as “the activity of repeated, aggressive behavior intended to harm another person, physically or emotionally.” Research on older adult bullying in the field of social work indicates that 10% to 20% of residents or clients in older adult environments may be victims of bullying or relational aggression. Bullying can be subtle, such as spreading rumors about someone, to actual physical assaults resulting in serious harm. Most often it is verbal or involves behaviors such as excluding others, saving seats, gossiping, or hounding another resident for cigarettes or money.

Cliquish behavior may be found in small groups of residents who lay claim to certain spaces or territories in the building to feel a sense of belonging at the expense of others who may feel excluded. Victims frequently feel ignored, teased, or shunned. There may be obscene gestures, name-calling, and even threatening language and intimidation. If you observe bullying behavior at your residence, contact your Resident Services Coordinator. Bullying is a lease violation and is taken very seriously.

Reference: *Older Adult Bullying — How Social Workers Can Help Establish Zero Tolerance (2017) by Kate Jackson*

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Protect yourself from Scammers

1. Never buy from (or give to) anyone who calls or visits unannounced. Don't buy from an unfamiliar company and never donate if it requires you to write your credit card information on any forms. Always take your time in making a decision.

2. Shred all receipts with your credit card number. Identity theft is a huge business. To protect yourself, invest in—and use—a paper shredder. Monitor your bank and credit card statements and never give out personal information over the phone to someone who initiates the contact with you.

3. Never give your credit card, banking, Social Security, Medicare, or other personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call. Misuse of Medicare dollars is one of the largest scams involving seniors. Protect your Medicare number and be wary of salespeople trying to sell you something they claim will be paid for by Medicare. If you think you've been scammed, don't be afraid or embarrassed to talk about it—waiting could only make it worse. Immediately: Call your bank and/or credit card company, cancel any debit or credit cards linked to the stolen account, and reset your personal identification number(s).

Cold Weather Tips

Frozen pipes can lead to a big mess and cost you a bundle. Here are a few tips on avoiding weather-related disasters at home:

- Allow a small trickle of water to run overnight, preferably through a faucet on an outside wall.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinets so warmer air can circulate below the sinks.
- Know the locations of your shut-off valves, in case a pipe bursts.

Pet owners should take special precautions with their animals during freezing temperatures. It's best to keep all pets indoors. Cats will curl up against almost anything to stay warm, including car engines. Before you turn your engine on, check beneath the car or make plenty of noise by honking the horn. Some animals can safely remain outside longer in the winter than others.

Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and hormonal imbalances can compromise a pet's ability to regulate body heat. Consider dog sweaters during walks. When outside with your pets, watch them for signs of discomfort. If they whine, shiver, seem anxious, slow down or stop moving, or start to look for warm places to burrow, they're saying they want to get back someplace warm.

A THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNER:



Northwest Housing Alternatives (NHA) would like to thank Mary's Woods for hosting classes and events throughout our Portland Metro Area senior properties.

Mary's Woods offers classes and programs on emergency preparedness, bingo, crafts, potlucks, etc., at no cost! See your resident services coordinator for information on the next upcoming class!

Mary's Woods also offers Home Care Services, which provides highly professional, exceptional

personal care and nursing services in the comfort of your own home, at a low-cost. If you are in need of services at home, and are interested in getting a free assessment, contact your resident services coordinator!

