

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS



BLAZE A TRAIL: MAY 2016

The 2016 Older Americans Month (OAM) theme, “Blaze a Trail,” emphasizes the ways older adults are reinventing themselves through new work and passions, engaging their communities, and blazing a trail of positive impact on the lives of people of all ages.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) and its Administration on Aging (AoA) encourage organizations around the country to plan activities in honor of OAM. This guide offers ideas to help you bring older adults together with others in your community to learn, socialize, and have fun.

Whether you plan one activity or several, ACL and AoA commend your participation! Remember, tailor these activities to best suit your needs and the interests of the older adults in your community.

Don't forget to share your plans and successes using **#OAM16**

Trailblazer Stories



Hold a community “trailblazer” story competition. Personal stories are great ways to share the accomplishments of your community members while inspiring others to take action. Encourage the older adults in your area to share how they are blazing trails—giving back to the community, starting new careers or hobbies, redefining aging, or anything else that says, “trailblazer.” The call for stories can be broad or focused on a special topic. ACL created a [Guide for Organizers](#) that offers suggestions, a sample release form, and more.

Trail Walk (Indoor or Outdoor)



In an accessible location, host a walk with trail markers (stations) staffed by people who can talk about OAM-related themes (financial security, connection, wellness, etc.). Participants can stop at each station to get information or participate in an activity. For instance, a fitness marker could be operated by someone demonstrating gentle stretches or by a nutritionist offering tips on

healthy foods. Seek community volunteers who want to share their expertise. ACL's [InfoSheets](#) offer ideas for topics; you might even print them for your stations.

Give Back Group



Seek older adults (and others!) who want to volunteer. Plan an activity that gives something back to your community. Projects might involve picking up trash or gardening in public areas—possibly along a local trail/path to tie into the theme. Alternatives include collecting donations for charity, painting walls in an

underserved school, and volunteering to support local service members. Collaborate with a nonprofit in your area—they may already have ideas or projects that can get you started. Toolkits from Serve.gov are also great resources.

Intergenerational Connection



Younger and older adults can form lasting and mutually beneficial relationships with one another. Encourage these connections by organizing an activity with a local school or special groups, like Boys and Girls Clubs. Invite older adults to tutor and mentor the students, or have students interview and write about older community members. Start by

contacting a school or club administrator. Alternatively, get teenagers and young adults to reach out. They can volunteer in senior centers, help neighbors with yard work, or just visit. Go to Generations United for more ideas about creating these important connections.

OAM Event



Invite community members to a luncheon, half-day, day long, or evening event celebrating Older Americans Month. There are a number of approaches to an activity like this, from variety shows to workshops. If you want something fun and casual, think about a “Trailblazers Have Talent” show with older musicians, magicians, and others. You can even

sell tickets to benefit a local charity. If you want to plan something more educational, invite local experts (professors, authors, professionals) to present on special topics. Here are [Event Planning Tips](#) to help you get started.

