



Trending Healthy

March 2025

Moving Forward: Addressing Our Community's Needs in a Time of Uncertainty

Proposed cuts to critical services at the federal level have created a climate of uncertainty. O3A is working to ensure that we use our resources to best meet the needs of the people we serve—especially focusing on nutrition, maintaining and building on our dementia services, and protecting funding for Medicaid home and community-based services.



So far, the news from the state is promising with respect to nutrition funding and funding for some programs, but the state is facing a budget deficit, and some cuts are expected. We won't know until late April what the state funding looks like. In the meantime, O3A is in a strong position financially and will continue to monitor service gaps and areas with the highest need in order to prioritize where we spend. We are working hard to keep a safety net in place so that older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers can remain independent and live with dignity in the place of their choosing.

This issue focuses on some of the new developments in our dementia program and issues related to brain health, and also covers some other O3A news. Read on to learn what we've been up to!

In this issue:

- **DEMENTIA SERVICES and BRAIN HEALTH**
- **O3A and Northwind Art Partner for New Dementia-Friendly Program in Port Townsend**
- **New Memory Café Launches in South Pacific County**
- **Upcoming Dealing with Dementia Workshops for Family Caregivers**
- **The Impact of Caregiving**
- **Brain Health Recipe: Easy Tuna Cakes with Greens & Lemon Dressing**
- **Understanding How Medicines Can Affect the Brain**

- **OTHER O3A NEWS**

ElliQ Robotic Companion Effectively Reduces Loneliness and Supports Wellness

New Mobile Services Set to Launch in April

WA Cares Fund Will Provide an Extra Safety Net for Washington Residents Starting in 2026



**Are you looking for services for
older adults, adults with
disabilities, or family caregivers?**

Call us or stop by!

Clallam County:

Forks Office (360) 374-9496

Sequim Office (360) 452-3221

Grays Harbor County:

Aberdeen Office (360) 532-0520

Jefferson County:

Port Townsend Office (360) 385-2552

Pacific County:

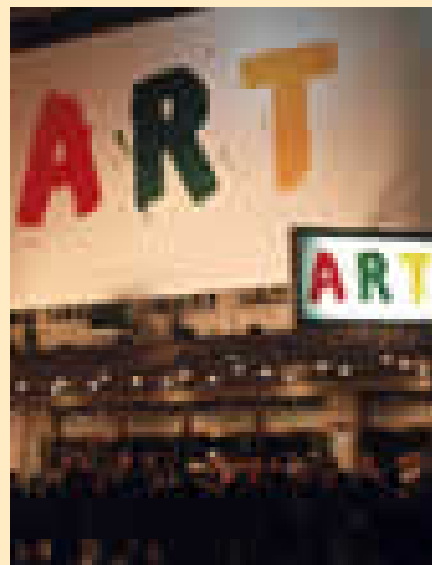
Long Beach Office (360) 642-3634

Raymond Office (360) 942-2177

Or visit our website: o3a.org

- **O3A and Northwind Art Partner for
New Dementia-Friendly Program in
Port Townsend**

Beginning March 25, Northwind Art will offer a series of art workshops and gallery conversations designed for those with memory loss and their caregivers. The series is sponsored by the Olympic Area Agency on Aging (O3A) as part of its Dementia Action Catalyst program.



“We’re very excited to partner with Northwind,” said Bri Buchanan, O3A’s Dementia Outreach Development

Coordinator. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for people with memory loss to explore their creative side and participate in conversations about art, and it provides a great way for caregivers to connect and experience a community of people who understand the challenges of caring for a loved one with dementia. Memory loss can be so isolating. Northwind’s program is a friendly space.”

The series will include six art workshops on March 25th, April 1st, May 6th, May 22nd, June 3rd, and June 24th as well as gallery conversations on April 14th, May 12th, and June 9th. Events will take place at Northwind Art’s classroom at Fort Worden and the Jeanette Best Gallery in downtown Port Townsend.

Pre-registration is required. For more information, visit NorthwindArt.org or call 360.379.1086, ext. 104.



New Memory Café Launches in South Pacific County

Memory Cafes are relaxed social gatherings for people living with memory loss and their care partners. They provide an opportunity to enjoy regular social interaction with peers in

a safe, judgment-free, welcoming environment.

O3A and Ocean Beach Hospital have partnered to launch a new Memory Café in Ilwaco. The Memory Café is scheduled for the fourth Thursday of each month from 1:00-2:30 at the Trading Post Café, 108 1st Ave. N. Registration is not required.

For more information, please contact Julie Eckert, Olympic Area Agency on Aging, at Julie.eckert@dshs.wa.gov or Rachel Cassidy, Ocean Beach Hospital, at rcassidy@oceanbeachhospital.com.

Upcoming Dealing with Dementia Workshops for Family Caregivers

Free 4-hour workshops about the physical changes, behavioral changes, and communication strategies for those caring for family members. Registration is required. Please contact Bri Buchanan at 360-417-8540 or brittnie.buchanan@dshs.wa.gov.



Dealing with Dementia Workshop- Port Angeles

4/1/2025 10am-2pm
Port Angeles Senior Center

Dealing with Dementia Workshop- Port Townsend

5/6/2025 10am-2pm

Port Townsend Community Center

620 Tyler St

Port Townsend, WA 98368

Community Organizations and Faith-Based Organizations Invited to Apply for Small Grants to Create Social Programs for Those with Dementia

O3A's Dementia Outreach Program Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeks to award funding to successful applicants to promote and support the development of social model engagement programs for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers in rural areas by:



- Connecting organizations with social model programs designed for early-stage programming and to support their initial social model program development; and
- Supporting organization in becoming sustainable in offering these critical community supports on an ongoing basis.

Projects will be funded to a maximum of \$10,000, depending on availability of funds and number of applications received. Applications will be reviewed for funding in the order received. The deadline for submission is **May 31**, and approved programs must be initiated prior to June 30, 2025.

For more information, please visit

<https://www.o3a.org/contracting/special-opportunities/> or contact Bri Buchanan, O3A Dementia Outreach Development Coordinator, 360-417-8540 or brittnie.buchanan@dshs.wa.gov.



The Impact of Caregiving

The demands of caregiving for an individual with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias (AD/D) can limit a caregiver's ability to appropriately care of themselves. Caring for individuals with AD/D, especially in the later stages of the disease, can be extremely

demanding. The chronic stressors of caregiving often affect the caregiver's financial stability, physical health, and emotional well-being. As a result, caregivers are at greater risk for anxiety, depression, and poorer quality of life than caregivers of people with other conditions.

For more information on the Impact of Caregiving, refer to the [National](#)

[Institute of Health Issues in Dementia Caregiving: Effects on Mental and Physical Health, Intervention Strategies, and Research Needs document](#) and the [Alzheimer's Association "Caregiver Stress" web page](#).

Supports and Resources Available for Caregivers

There are many approaches to caring for someone living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. Handling these duties is hard work, but resources and support are available to help you. It is important to take care of your own physical and mental health as well as manage a wide range of tasks. Research shows that caregivers who access support activities regularly are healthier and better able to provide care.

(Excerpted from

https://health.ny.gov/diseases/conditions/dementia/brain_health/caregivers.htm. Please visit the link for more information and resources.)

Brain Health Recipe: Easy Tuna Cakes with Greens & Lemon Dressing

Ingredients

- ½ cup rinsed no-salt-added canned white beans
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 3 teaspoons Dijon mustard, divided
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 teaspoon dried mint
- ½ teaspoon dried tarragon
- 2 (5 ounce) cans wild albacore tuna packed in oil, drained
- ¾ cup whole-wheat panko breadcrumbs
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 (5 ounce) package spring mix salad greens

Directions

1. Coarsely mash beans with a fork or potato masher in a large bowl. Stir in egg, 2 teaspoons mustard, lemon zest, dill, mint and tarragon. Flake tuna into chunks; gently fold into the bean mixture. Sprinkle panko over the mixture; gently fold in until well combined. Form the mixture into 4 (1-inch-thick) patties.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Swirl to coat the pan. Cook the patties until golden brown on both sides, about 3 minutes per side.
3. Whisk lemon juice, honey, pepper, salt and the remaining 1 teaspoon mustard and 5 tablespoons oil in a small bowl. Divide greens among 4 plates; top each with a tuna cake and drizzle evenly with dressing.



[Originally appeared in EatingWell.com, June 2021. Find this and other recipes that promote brain health at

Understanding How Medicines Can Affect the Brain

Some medicines and [combinations of medicines](#) can cause confusion, memory loss, hallucinations, and delusions in older adults.

Medicines can also interact with food, dietary supplements, alcohol, and other substances. Some of these interactions can affect how your brain functions. Drugs that can impair older adults' cognition include:

- Antihistamines for allergy relief
- Sleep aids
- Antipsychotics
- Muscle relaxants
- Drugs that treat urinary incontinence
- Medications for relief of cramps in the stomach, intestines, and bladder
-

Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your medications or possible side effects. Do not stop taking any prescribed medications without consulting your health care provider first.

[from the National Institute on Aging

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/brain-health/cognitive-health-and-older-adults#:~:text=Some medicines and combinations of,affect how your brain functions.>]

You can find a more detailed report about the effects of some medications on the National Institute on Aging website here:

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/d7/MedAgeBrain-Brochure.pdf>



ElliQ Robotic Companion Effectively Reduces Loneliness and Supports Wellness

Our pilot project with the unique AI-driven robot, ElliQ, started about two years ago with 20 robots in Grays Harbor and Pacific

Counties. Last year, we expanded to 40 robots and added participants in Jefferson and Clallam Counties.

The robot, designed specifically as a companion for older adults, has been

very well received by our participants as well as thousands of others throughout the country. Most say that ElliQ makes them feel less lonely and helps them stay healthier. Many use the exercise videos, medication reminders, and health tracking (for things like blood pressure and blood sugar levels).

ElliQ also has several cognitive games to help users stay engaged mentally, plus entertainment features like music and virtual road trips, and the ability to send messages or make video calls to family and friends.

See our most recent impact report here:

<https://www.o3a.org/files/2025/03/ElliQ-Impact-Report-Q4.pdf>

New Mobile Services Set to Launch in April

O3A will be contracting with Coastal Harvest to provide additional food supplies to Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties through their existing network. Coastal Harvest supplies food pantries and community meal programs throughout the area. Recent cuts to federal programs, however, will reduce the funding even while the need for food has increased significantly due to higher food prices. O3A's funds will provide a new revenue stream to help meet the need.



We will also be contracting with the Sequim Food Bank, which will serve several sites in Clallam County with public-facing events, much like our previous MAV program. The sites will be in areas with the most need and least access to food. The Sequim Food Bank uses a mobile market set-up where guests choose the items they need, rather than being given a box of preselected produce, for instance. This reduces food waste and allows guests to choose foods according to their preferences and any special dietary needs.



WA Cares Fund Will Provide an Extra Safety Net for Washington Residents Starting in 2026

Proposed federal budget cuts to essential programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and SNAP risk leaving vulnerable groups, including older

adults and low-income households, without critical support. These cuts, alongside state budget deficits, could severely impact healthcare, nutrition, and long-term care services. However, Washington introduced a beacon of hope with the WA Cares Fund, a voter-backed initiative providing a long-term care safety net for its workers starting in 2026.

Amidst nationwide concerns over safety net reductions, Washington's innovative WA Cares Fund stands out as a crucial lifeline, offering flexible benefits for long-term care needs, from in-home care to assisted living

facilities. This self-funded program not only aids individuals in managing care expenses but also supports unpaid family caregivers, addressing a significant gap in the current care system.

As federal and state safety nets face cuts, the WA Cares Fund exemplifies a proactive approach to safeguarding the well-being of its residents, particularly the elderly, disabled, and low-income families. This initiative could serve as a model for other states grappling with similar challenges. With a starting benefit of \$36,500, adjustable for inflation, the fund aims to cover significant long-term care costs, with flexible benefiting ranging from in-home care to necessary home modifications. This initiative is a testament to Washington's commitment to its citizens' health and financial security.

The WA Cares Fund has emerged as a critical support system amidst looming safety net cuts, highlighting Washington's leadership in addressing the long-term care crisis. This program not only provides financial relief to individuals and families but also underscores the importance of state-level innovation in healthcare policy.

Did you know...Volunteering is a great way to stay engaged, both mentally and socially?

O3A has several opportunities. Is one of them a good fit for you?

*Learn about volunteering with our **Advisory Council, SHIBA program, and Ombuds program** at <https://www.o3a.org/get-involved/volunteer/>*

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Thanks, and happy reading!



Editor's Invitation: Thank you for reading *Trending Healthy*. Please let us know if there is an important topic about healthy aging that you would like to see us address. You can email michelle.fogus@dshs.wa.gov with your suggestions.



www.o3a.org

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