

**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**



**Department of Human Services  
Division of Elderly Affairs**

**RHODE ISLAND SENIOR BEAT**

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**RELEASE:** Friday, March 22, 2013

**LEARNING IS A LIFELONG EXPERIENCE**

**CRANSTON** --- Last year, the national theme for the observance of May as Older Americans Month was “Never to Old to Play.” The Administration on Aging could have gone one step further by adding, “Never to Old to Learn.”

Healthy aging is an idea whose time has come. It’s already a reality for many seniors and members of the “Baby Boomer” generation. Healthy aging is the product of a plan that includes good nutrition, exercise, continued connections to family and friends, and stimulation for your mind.

Learning is a lifelong experience. Many seniors start new hobbies, resume ones that they were too busy to pursue when they were working, take college courses, join travel clubs, or even learn new skills. Exercising your mind as well as your body is one way to ensure wellness and personal growth. Rhode Island seniors have many options to continue their learning experience.

Rhode Island residents 60 and older may take courses at state colleges, on a space-available basis, without paying tuition. Students must have a household income less than three times the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL). Other fees and charges may apply. Contact your area college or university. Some local private colleges and universities may also have adult education programs. Contact the school’s office of continuing education for more information.

The Elderhostel /Road Scholar program is the world’s largest travel and education organization for persons 55 and older. The organization’s focus is on educational and lifelong learning adventures. Financial assistance is available to eligible seniors. For more information, call 1-800-454-5768, or log on to [www.road scholar.org](http://www.road scholar.org).

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The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Rhode Island is a learning community for active adults, 50 and older, who want to explore a wide variety of subjects and programs without worry of exams, grades, or academic requirements. For more information, call 874-4194 or 874-4197. You can also visit their web site at [www.uri.edu/OLLI](http://www.uri.edu/OLLI).

The Learning Connection offers many adult education options that span the spectrum from leisure activities to starting a business. Their objective is to make learning not only stimulating, but also fun. You can enroll in culinary classes, music lessons, learn to dance, or take a course in creative writing. You can enroll in a fitness program, or learn a new sport. In fact, I took curling lessons last fall. If you're interested in business, you can take a course in finance, marketing or communications, beginning a new career, or learning about the latest business technologies. Fees apply for most courses. For more information, call 274-9330, or go to [www.learnconnect.com](http://www.learnconnect.com).

Don't overlook learning opportunities at your local senior center. Many senior centers offer computer classes, arts and crafts, book clubs, trips, and other activities designed to keep your mind sharp. Some churches, libraries, and other organizations sponsor lifetime learning groups. Contact your local school department, civic organization, or church, for information.

With the advance of computer technology, seniors also have an opportunity to use e-learning as a way to keep their minds active. E-learning allows you to study online as an alternative to traditional classroom lessons. E-learning is also a great option for persons with disabilities that would prevent them from travelling to a particular site. While some e-learning courses may have fees, many others are free; and you won't have books or transportation costs.

Whatever way you choose to continue learning, stimulating your mind as well as your body is the key to healthy aging. So keep learning. A new experience is right around the corner, or as close as your home computer.

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The Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA) is responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of programs and services for Rhode Islanders ages 60 and older and for adults with disabilities. Questions or requests for additional information on the issues of growing older, or for issues concerning adults with disabilities in Rhode Island should be directed to: Larry Grimaldi, Rhode Island Senior Beat, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs, 74 West Road, Cranston, RI 02920 or faxed to 462-0545. The e-mail address is [lgrimaldi@dea.ri.gov](mailto:lgrimaldi@dea.ri.gov).

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