

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



Department of Human Services
Division of Elderly Affairs

RHODE ISLAND SENIOR BEAT

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ELDERLY AFFAIRS BEGINS ANNUAL SEARCH FOR CENTENARIANS

CRANSTON --- In two short weeks, we will celebrate the beginning of spring. This week, we turn the clocks ahead and each day brings a little more sunlight. The onset of spring also means that the observance of May as Older Americans Month is just around the corner. And in Rhode Island, the calendar of Older Americans Month events is marked by a tradition that stretches back more than three decades-the Governor's Centenarians Brunch.

The Rhode Island Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA) has begun its annual survey to locate persons who are age 100 or older. Centenarians will receive an invitation from Governor Lincoln Chafee to the 36th annual Governor's Centenarians Brunch. The brunch will be held on Thursday, May 2 at the Bridge at Cherry Hill, One Cherry Hill Road in Johnston at 10:00 a.m.

The Centenarians Brunch is one of the highlights of the state's annual celebration of May as Older Americans Month. Last year, DEA located nearly 100 centenarians living in the state, of which than 60 attended the brunch.

Persons age 100 and older, or persons who will reach their 100th birthday before December 31, 2013, can register with DEA to receive an invitation to the brunch by filling out the **2013 CENTENARIANS BRUNCH SURVEY**. Reservations are required to attend the brunch. For additional information, or to receive a survey, call DEA at 462-0501, or log on to www.dea.ri.gov. Surveys can be returned via e-mail to kzaroojian@dea.ri.gov, or faxed to 462-0503. Surveys should be returned to DEA no later than March 15.

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RI Senior Beat-March 8, 2013-centenarians-page 2

The earliest Centenarians Brunch celebrations were held in the State Room at the State House, where as few as 25 centenarians were honored. Over the years, the event gradually outgrew the State Room location and assisted living facilities across the state agreed to host the brunch. Over the last decade, an average of more than 50 centenarians and their escorts have joined the governor for this traditional observance of May as Older Americans Month.

This year, the national theme for Older Americans month is “Unleash the Power of Age.” The Administration on Aging notes, “The theme for Older Americans Month 2013, ‘Unleash the Power of Age,’ has never been more fitting. Older Americans are productive, active, and influential members of society, sharing essential talents, wisdom, and life experience with their families, friends, and neighbors.”

Older Americans Month has been an American tradition since 1963, when President Kennedy designated May as Senior Citizens Month. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter changed the name to Older Americans Month.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there are 40 million Americans 65 and older, approximately 13 percent of the population. By the year 2050, that number is projected to increase to more than 88 million.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Rhode Island is home to more than 200,000 persons age 60 and older (19 percent), and 152,000 persons age 65 and older (14 percent). Census data also revealed that there are nearly 25,000 Rhode Islanders age 85 and older. This makes Rhode Island the leading state in the nation in concentration of individuals 85 and older.

Remember to register your centenarian to receive an invitation to the 36th annual Governor’s Centenarians Brunch on Thursday, May 2, no later than March 31st.

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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.