

July 2025 Narrative Report

Department Name: **Senior Center**

Budget: The senior center July's budget covers standard operational expenses, including program structure, instructor salaries, food, snacks, office supplies, printing materials, and other routine needs.

Personnel:

- The long awaited return of Kathleen D'Allassandro as our 3rd driver, enabled the center to extend transportation services for medical appointments to locations outside the Jackson bounder.
- Staff members are beginning to utilize their vacation time. We are actively coordinating coverage throughout the month of July. Staff are provided with updates regarding time-off requests to ensure staff is informed and aware of upcoming absences. This helps with planning and maintaining adequate coverage.
- Our activities occur in the morning and early afternoon, staff are often needed during these peak times. As a result, staff routinely delays or shortens their lunch breaks to ensure smooth operation and participant support.
- As part of our Area Plan Grant requirements, we have transitioned from our previous state reporting system, SAMS, to a new platform Mon Ami. The change was mandated by the state and requires detailed reporting for every participant in each of our funded taxonomies, including Physical Activities, Socialization, and Assisted Transportation.
- Staff have been actively participating in instructional online workshops to learn the new Mon Ami system.
- We are pleased to report that we have successfully begun entering data into Mon Ami. While the process is time-consuming, it is essential for compliance with the Area Plan Grant contract for accurately reflecting the senior attendance in our funded programs.

Senior Center Highlights:

- To promote wellness Hackensack Meridian conducted a health screen event following our morning exercise program. 35 seniors received immediate, verbal results for blood pressure, pulse, glucose and cholesterol levels.
- A bus trip was held to Barnegat's Lighthouse, followed by a group reservation at Sweet Jenny's Restaurant – a longtime favorite among our seniors.
- One of senior's favorite outings continues to be the bus trip to Point Pleasant Boardwalk. The day included time to enjoy the boardwalk, followed by lunch at The Shrimp Box – another popular spot among our seniors.
- A special highlight this month was our trip aboard the River Lady, a scenic boat cruise paired with a luncheon. This trip is considered one of our signature outings and is always well-received by our seniors.
- We offered 2 local shopping days per week to ensure our seniors can take care of their essential needs. These outings help them access groceries, medications, banking services and complete their personal errands, supporting their independence and well-being. Many of our seniors choose to enjoy lunch together after completing their errands during these shopping trips. Most of these seniors do not participate in our in-house activities sharing meals offers valuable social interaction that is especially meaningful for those who may otherwise be isolated.
- Six bingos events were held in July, each offering a snack or lunch. Winners received gift cards to popular shopping destinations such as Shop Rite, Walmart, Dollar Store, and Wawa. These events continue to be a favorite, combining fun, social interaction, and practical rewards.
- Another key priority is our Meals on Wheels program, in partnership with Community Services Inc. Through this collaboration, we serve a nutritious lunch to approximately 12 to 25 individuals, 3 days a week.
- In July, we hosted a variety of educational lectures as part of our commitment to lifelong learning. Topics included *A Taste of Italy*, *Getting a Good Night's Sleep*, *Summer Safety Tips* and *Nutrition and Wellness*. Education remains a key focus of our senior center, helping participants stay informed, healthy, and engaged.
- Our monthly birthday celebration and bingo event was held on July 24th. Each month, we honor seniors with birthdays during that month by singing *Happy Birthday* (Jackson version) and recognizing them individually, for many it is often the only celebration some receive, especially those living alone. The event is followed by 5 games of bingo, adding fun and social connection to this special day.
- Each month, we offer a variety of in house activities, including billiards, mahjong, ceramics, knit/crochet and Wii bowling. These programs are a highlight for many of our seniors and often serve as their primary opportunity to leave home, engage socially, and enjoy meaningful interaction with others. These activities play a vital role in reducing isolation and promoting a sense of community.

- Another group of senior's regularly participants in our 7 weekly exercise classes, which range from mild to advanced levels. These classes attract some of our most active members. While many drive themselves, we also provide transportation for the few participants via our buses. Attendance for these classes typically ranges from 25 to 50 seniors per session, highlighting their popularity and impact on senior wellness.

Building Update:

- The renovation of the lobby and kitchen continues to experience significant delays.
- We have been without a functioning kitchen since June 11, and the space remains gutted.
- Unfortunately, due to the continued delay in the completion of the kitchen, we were forced to reschedule our quarterly party.
- The lack of a working kitchen has also disrupted our normal daily operations and food service routines. We remain committed to adapting and ensuring the best possible experience for our seniors throughout the renovation process.
- There are ongoing issues involving the ceiling, vestibule flooring, cabinetry and refrigerator, all of which have contribute to the extended timeline.
- We endured a week without access to the restrooms, attendance was low as many did not want to access the portable units Shawn provided.
- For 3 weeks, the lobby was inaccessible, but we successfully assisted our seniors through alternate entrances to maintain a safe access to the building.
- On a positive note automatic interior lobby door and automatic doors leading into the main meeting room have now been installed, enhancing accessibility for all.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Slisky, Senior Center