



Bruce Rauner, Governor
Jean Bohnhoff, Director

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PRESS RELEASE

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Illinois Department on Aging celebrates Older Americans Month *Department encourages older adults across the state to “Age Out Loud”*

Springfield – The Illinois Department on Aging today recognized more than 2 million older adults statewide in honor of Older Americans Month, which is a national observance taking place every May. Governor Bruce Rauner also proclaimed May 2017 as Older Americans Month in Illinois. This year’s theme – Age Out Loud – is a call to action for older adults across Illinois and the nation to live boldly and age fearlessly.

“Older adults are the backbone of our society. The contributions they’ve made have been imprinted on our history forever. Older Americans Month is an opportunity for us all to recognize those accomplishments and contributions,” says Jean Bohnhoff, Director of the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). “By fulfilling our mission of administering programs that encourage independence, dignity and quality of life, the Department on Aging hopes to continue to give older Illinoisans the tools they need to age with peace of mind and grace.”

The Department, together with our network partners, will be hosting the 19th Annual Central Illinois Senior Celebration on May 17th at the Orr Building on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. The event features free health screenings, information, exhibitors, prizes and entertainment and is co-hosted by the Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland; AARP Illinois; Illinois Secretary of State & State Librarian, Jesse White; Memorial Medical Center; Senior Services of Central Illinois; HSHS St. John’s Hospital; and SIU Medicine.

From the 78-year-old grandma who deadlifts 225lbs to the 62-year-old winner of a senior spelling bee, IDoA hopes to inspire older adults to live with confidence and embrace new and exciting adventures. “We’re improving the way we serve seniors to allow them to maintain their independence, enhance their quality of life and preserve their health,” remarked Director Bohnhoff. “I encourage our older adults to take advantage of resources and social programs throughout their community – get out and do something new!”

For more information about programs and services to assist older adults in Illinois, their families and caregivers, log on to the department website at: <http://www.illinois.gov/aging/> or call the Department on Aging at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 1-888-206-1327).

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The text of the Governor's proclamation is below:

Whereas, the State of Illinois is home to more than two million residents aged 60 years or older; and

Whereas, the State of Illinois includes older Americans who richly contribute to our community; and

Whereas, older adults are members of our community entitled to dignified, independent lives free from fears, myths, and misconceptions about aging; and,

Whereas, each community in the United States must strive to recognize, understand and address the evolving needs of older adults, and support their caregivers; and,

Whereas, the State of Illinois is committed to supporting older adults as they take charge of their health, explore new opportunities and activities, and focus on independence; and

Whereas, the State of Illinois can provide opportunities to enrich the lives of individuals of *all ages* by:

- involving older adults in the redefinition of aging in our community;
- promoting home- and community-based services that support independent living;
- encouraging older adults to speak up for themselves and others; and
- providing opportunities for older adults to share their experiences; and

Whereas, older adults in our state deserve to be recognized for the contributions they have made and will continue to make to the culture, economy, and character of our community and our nation; and

Whereas, this year's Older Americans Month theme, Age out Loud, focuses on giving aging a new voice—one that reflects what today's older adults have to say.

Now therefore, I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim May 2017 as OLDER AMERICANS MONTH in Illinois, and urge every resident to take time during this month to acknowledge older adults and the people who serve them as influential and vital parts of our community.

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