

A Community of Support, Enrichment & Fun for our Alexandria Neighbors Ages 55+

Summer Is Not Through Yet: Navigating The Summer Days Ahead

by Jamie Ciesla, AHA Executive Director

This summer has brought several stretches of extreme heat along with poor air quality and hazy skies from the Canadian wildfires. Many of us have had to rethink our daily walks, outdoor gatherings, and even routine errands to stay safe.

While we can't control the weather, there are practical steps we can take to protect ourselves and one another.

Practical Reminders to Beat the Heat

- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, especially water.
- Keep your space as cool as possible. Limit use of the oven and keep shades, blinds, or curtains closed during the hottest part of the day.
- Wear lightweight clothing and use fans or air conditioning when possible.
- Limit outdoor activities during the hottest part of the afternoon.
- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen, SPF 30 or higher, and reapply it throughout the day, especially if your skin will have continuous exposure to the sun.
- Know the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, including headache, confusion, dizziness, nausea, rapid pulse, or fainting. Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms are severe or do not improve.
- Check with your healthcare provider or pharmacist to see whether any medications you take increase your sensitivity to heat.

Wildfire Smoke & Poor Air Quality: What You Should Know

- Smoke from wildfires can travel hundreds or even thousands of miles.
- Older adults and people with heart or lung conditions are especially vulnerable.
- On days with poor air quality:
 - Keep windows closed.
 - Run air conditioning on the recirculate setting, if possible.
 - Reduce strenuous outdoor activity.
 - Check the Air Quality Index on your phone's weather app or online at AirNow (www.airnow.gov/) before heading outside.

Just as important as protecting ourselves is looking out for one another. Extreme heat and poor air quality can make it difficult for some neighbors to get out or stay connected. A quick phone call, offering a ride to an appointment, or simply checking in can make a meaningful difference. As we head into the final weeks of summer, I encourage each of us to slow down, reach out, and lend a hand. Together, we can help ensure that everyone stays connected, healthy, and safe.

August 2026 Calendar

Reminder to Register for AHA Events. We love that you love showing up to your AHA events. Reminder, don't forget to register so your host(s) know you are coming. They want to prepare well for you and ensure that locations can accommodate and set up to host you well. You register at 703-231-0824 or AHA@AtHomeInAlexandria.org or <https://AtHomeInAlexandria.org/events-calendar>

Monthly Events

Tuesdays, August 4, 11, and 25	AHA Yoga at The View in Alexandria House. Spaces may be limited. *Mat Yoga 9:30-10:30; Chair Yoga 11am-12 noon. NOTE: BOTH classes are FULL currently.	9:30am - 12pm*
Tuesdays, August 4, 11, and 18	Weekly Scrabble at the home of Jeff and Donna Gathers. Limit of 3.	1:30pm
Tuesday, August 11	Ladies' Night Out Samuel Beckett's Irish Gastro Pub; 2800 S Randolph St #110, Arlington, VA 22206.	5pm
Wednesday, August 19	Third Wednesday Book Club on Zoom. "The Family of Spies" by Christine Kuehn	7pm
Monday, August 17	Lively Arts Discussion at Charlotte Tsoucalas's home. Limit of 10.	10am
Thursday, August 20	Tech Thursday How to recognize and deal with SPAM. AHA Office 3139 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Limit of 10.	1pm
Thursday, August 20	Men's Night Out at Aldo's Italian Kitchen, 2850 Eisenhower Ave. No limit.	5-6:30pm
Monday, August 24	Morning Brew at Panera 3201 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22314. See article on page 4.	10am
Wednesday, August 26	Solo AHAer Group at Aldo's Italian Kitchen, 2850 Eisenhower Avenue. No limit. See article on page 3.	1 pm
Thursday, August 27	Lunch Around Mason Social 728 N Henry Street. Limit of 10.	12:30pm

Solo Agers: Join Us

By At Home In Alexandria

Some of us are aging in place without a significant other or adult child in our lives, known as Solo Aging. If you are a solo ager, the AHA Solo Agers Group is for you.

Please join us. AHA has developed an engaged and proactive Solo Agers Group within our Village. Our goal is to go from aging alone to aging together (Solo Agers connecting with other Solo Agers and forming their own village/support community). We meet for lunch on the 4th Wednesday of each month. If you have questions or thoughts about this great group, you can learn more by emailing Gary Hacker at ghacker611@aol.com.

Carol Marak, author of *Solo and Smart* and creator of the *Solo and Smart Program*, launched the Facebook group Elder Orphan uncovering the widespread epidemic of adults aging in place but doing so on their own. You can find the Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/140870400035460.

We will use Marak's Solo and Smart Programs to guide us in our work as we address:

- Redefining Independence: Moving from self-reliance to building a trusted network of people and professionals.
- Health and Caregiving: Staying healthy and preparing for in-home care or help during recovery.
- Social Engagement: Combating isolation by building meaningful connections with like-minded people.
- Building a Local Support Network: Engaging neighbors, friends and professionals who can notice changes in well-being.
- Legal and Financial Matters: Setting up documents like healthcare proxies, powers of attorney, and strategies to avoid outliving one's savings.

Successful solo aging relies heavily on establishing a reliable "just-in-case" network and legally formalizing your wishes. This group aims to help you achieve this and more.

Solo Aging Resource Books

*Solo Wise: A roadmap for Fearless
Solo Living* by Beverly Bernstein Joie

*Old, Solo and Unsupervised: A
Gloriously Unchaperoned Guide to
Later Life* by CC Gardens

*Aging Solo: A Single Woman's
Guide to Creating a Confident Future*
by Ellen Dawson

Solo Agers Go Beyond Childlessness



SPOTLIGHT ON AHA EVENTS

Peaceful Mind and Peaceful Body: Join Us for Yoga for Seniors

by Virginia (Ginny) B. Kalish, MD, AHA Member



It gives me great pleasure to host AHA Yoga **every Tuesday morning**. Held at the View at the Alexandria House from **9:30 – noon**, both a mat and a chair yoga session are offered. Please join us but be sure to register ahead of time as space is limited. There is a **\$15/month** charge.

Almost all yoga classes focus on flexibility, balance, core strength, and mental well-being. At our AHA sessions, we offer a Slow Flo and Gentle Mat Yoga from 9:30 – 10:30. These sessions are slow paced forms of yoga on the mat, where poses may be practiced standing, sitting, and lying supine.

We also offer Chair Yoga from 11 – noon. In Chair Yoga, participants practice in a chair and standing beside a chair without needing to get up and down from a mat.

Join Us for a Monthly Morning Brew

New to AHA? Haven't joined us at an outing or connected with anyone just yet? Wondering where to start in meeting your village?

Join us for a Morning Brew. Every 4th Monday of the month, we host this special moment for new members to meet those who have been with AHA for some time. It's the best place to break the ice "coffee" and get to know your community. This month, meet us on **Monday, August 24th** at **Panera on Duke St!**



Introducing New Volunteer Deidra Kendall

in her own words



I am a former Army Arabic linguist and getting a second degree in gerontology. My wife and I met in the Army, and we have two cats, Meat and Tisa. I enjoy cooking, board and video games, and have a 421-day reading streak on my Kindle app. I look forward to getting to know the AHA community.

I am eager to say yes to your requests! From giving rides to caring for your pets to hosting a few events, I can't wait to help and support events, I can't wait to help and support the members of AHA.

Unlocking Compassion in Times of Need

By Erin Whalen, Founder, Compassionate Coaching

"I think you unlocked something in me, Erin." Those were the words one participant shared after experiencing Playback Theatre at a Mother's Day event for people who had lost their mothers or children.

Before the event, I explained what to expect: audience members would be invited to share personal stories, and a team of actors and musicians would bring those stories to life through spontaneous performance. But no explanation can fully capture what it feels like to experience Playback Theatre firsthand.

Playback Theatre is an interactive art form that began more than 50 years ago and is now practiced in more than 70 countries. It has been used in healthcare, education, community organizations, and other settings to foster listening, empathy, and connection.

During a Playback Theatre event, audience members who choose to participate share personal stories based on a common theme. Immediately afterward, actors and musicians create an improvised reflection of each story using music, movement, and drama. There are no scripts or rehearsals—only careful listening and creative response.

The experience can be profoundly moving. Seeing a personal story reflected back in this way often brings new insight and emotion. Even those who simply witness the performances frequently describe feeling less alone as they recognize pieces of their own lives in the stories of others.

When the themes are aging, loss, and grief, that sense of shared experience can be especially meaningful. In a world where these topics are often difficult to talk about, Playback Theatre creates space for people to be heard, to bear witness to one another's experiences, and to find connection through storytelling. Perhaps that's what the participant meant when she said, "I think you unlocked something in me."

CONTACT US

At Home in Alexandria

3139 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305
703-231-0824

AHA@AtHomeInAlexandria.org
www.AtHomeInAlexandria.org

Share Your Story with Us

By Nona Phinn, AHA Marketing and Membership Manager

As someone new to AHA, I must say that one thing that is apparent to me is that this is indeed a village. They say it takes a village, and you all are proving in real-time what this sweet proverb truly means. You bring these words to life.

It is crystal clear that you have been touched and changed by your participation and commitment to the AHA community. Your member is more than an organization. It's a relationship that has impacted you and one that you have impacted in turn. Wow!

Would you do me the pleasure of sharing your story with me? If you have an impact story, I want to hear it. How has AHA transformed your life? How have you benefitted from being a part of this village? Not just you, but also your children or other family members. What has been gained since being a part of us? If you would like to share your AHA story with me, please email me at marketing@AtHomeInAlexandria.org

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Special Days in August

<i>August 7</i>	<i>Farmers Market Pop Up at Annie B. Rose House, 399 Pendleton</i>
<i>August 12</i>	<i>Alexandria Sidewalk Sale In Old Town and Del Ray</i>
<i>August 14</i>	<i>Farmers Market Pop Up at Claridge House, 301 N. Ripley</i>
<i>August 18</i>	<i>Farmers Market Pop Up at Alate Old Town, 1112 First Street</i>
<i>August 24</i>	<i>First Day of School for City of Alexandria Public Schools</i>

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