



209 S. Merchant  
Effingham, IL 62401



# Sunset Times

# FEBRUARY 2026

To join the Sunset Times email list please email [kmontgomery@ecco.org](mailto:kmontgomery@ecco.org)  
or check out our website at [www.ecco.org](http://www.ecco.org)



**Come learn about  
“Teacup Gardening”  
courtesy of  
Linda Heynen, Master Gardener.**

**Presentation will be held on  
Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from  
1:00 pm to 2:00 pm in the  
Senior Services Activity Center.**

**Seating will be limited to the first 30  
participants, please call 217-347-5569  
to register today.**



**In observance of  
President's Day,  
we will be CLOSED  
Monday, February 16, 2026**



Senior Services of Effingham County is a division of Effingham City/County Committee on Aging (ECCOA) and is open to the public, and many activities are designed for people of all ages.

Operating hours are Monday through Friday – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Closed for lunch daily from 11:30 am to 12:00 pm

Phone: 217-347-5569 or toll free 1-833-442-5569 after hours and on weekends





# Community Care Program

**"...helping older people live independently"**



Established in 1979 by Public Act 81-202, the Illinois Department on Aging Community Care Program helps senior citizens, who might otherwise need nursing home care, to remain in their own homes by providing in-home and community-based services.

This program is aimed at helping seniors maintain their independence and providing cost effective alternatives to nursing home placement. The Community Care Program provides services to any person who applies for the program and meets all current eligibility requirements.

## Who is eligible?

People who...

- ✓ Are 60 years old or older
- ✓ A Medicaid recipient or Medicaid eligible
- ✓ Are U.S. citizens or legal aliens
- ✓ Are residents of Illinois
- ✓ Have non-exempt assets of \$17,500 or less  
(Non-exempt assets do not include home, car, or personal furnishings)
- ✓ Have an assessed need for long term care  
(scoring 29 points or higher on the "Determination Of Need" evaluation)



NOTE: Although the level of income does not affect eligibility for the program, an income is established for each client to determine the client's ability to contribute to the cost of care.

**Call Senior Services today for an assessment: 217-347-5569**

## Emergency Home Response Service: (EHRS)

EHRS is a Community Care Program core service provided to improve the independence and safety of clients in their own homes and help reduce the need for nursing home care.



Emergency Home Response Service (EHRS) is a 24-hour emergency communication link to assistance outside the home for older adults with documented health and safety needs and mobility limitations. This service is provided by a two-way voice communication system consisting of a base unit and an activation device worn by the participant that will automatically link the older adult to a professionally trained staffed support center. For more information on Emergency Home Response Services in your community, contact Senior Services at 217-347-5569.

EHRS offers 24-hours-a-day help at the touch of a button, installation at no cost to the client, free adaptive activation devices, and a list of first responders chosen by the client. To receive this service, an older adult must qualify for the Community Care Program.



Dine with a Doc® is a **FREE** program that welcomes the local senior public to hear an educational topic while enjoying a complimentary lunch. The next Dine with a Doc® lunch is scheduled for:

**Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, in the Senior Services Activity Center  
from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm.**

Each presenter has graciously donated their time in an effort to listen, hear, and answer your questions while sharing a meal with you. Various community businesses also participate by donating door prizes or providing a complimentary lunch for you to enjoy and learn about ways they may help you as well.

This month we are excited to present **Emily Konrad, APRN with HSHS Medical Group Urology**. Konrad is a family nurse practitioner who provides compassionate, patient-centered care for patients of all ages. She brings experience in primary care, chronic disease management and hospital-based nursing. Konrad is dedicated to supporting her patients' long-term health through education, empathy and evidence-based treatments. She chose to specialize in urology because of its balanced approach between medical management and procedural care.

Konrad completed her nurse practitioner training through clinical rotations at HSHS Medical Group Family Medicine and Jackson Health in Effingham, where she gained extensive experience in preventive care, acute illness management and individualized treatment planning. She earned her Master of Science in Nursing from Chamberlain University in Addison, Illinois, and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Lakeview College of Nursing in Charleston, Illinois.

Before becoming a nurse practitioner, Konrad served as a registered nurse in the medical-surgical unit at HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, where her bedside experience significantly shaped her collaborative and empathetic approach to patient care.

**Lunch will be complimentary and provided courtesy of:**



**\*\*Reservations are required and must be made by noon on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> by contacting the center at 217-347-5569\*\***



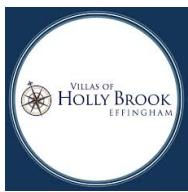
## **Long-Term Care Ombudsman**

Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program strives to protect and promote the rights and quality of life for those who reside in long-term care facilities. If you have a concern, complaint, or question regarding long-term care, please call **Lisa Light, Regional Ombudsman, at 217-347-5216 or 1-800-283-4070.**





- ❖ **Get Moving:** Don't let cold weather stop you. Try marching in place while watching TV or listening to your favorite audiobook. Cross-tap — right hand to left knee, left hand to right knee — for an added challenge.
- ❖ **Eat Well:** January brings wonderful winter produce like citrus fruits, sweet potatoes, and leafy greens. Pro tip: Substitute vegetables for other ingredients, like using spaghetti squash instead of pasta.
- ❖ **Keep Up With Preventive Care:** Medicare covers many preventive and screening services at no cost to you. These include services like your yearly wellness visit, cancer screenings, the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program, and depression screenings.



Please join us for cake & ice cream on **Thursday, February 26th** at **1:00 pm** for our monthly birthday party!

We will celebrate those who have a birthday in February with cake and ice cream provided by The Villas of Holly Brook.

You are welcome to stay afterwards and play cards, games, or just socialize with your friends.



**ILLINOIS TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS CORPORATION**

Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation (ITAC) has several amplified phones for selection for those family members with hearing problems.

This is a FREE program REQUIRED and GOVERNED by Illinois Law. There are no fees and no hidden costs.



Call Senior Services at 217-347-5569 for an appointment to test which phone is best for your needs. You'll be surprised at what you have missed by not being able to hear!



## The new \$6,000 senior tax deduction: who qualifies and how to claim it



### New Deduction for Seniors:

Effective for 2025 through 2028, individuals who are age 65 and older may claim an additional deduction of \$6,000. This new deduction is in addition to the current additional standard deduction for seniors under existing law.

- The \$6,000 senior deduction is per eligible individual
- Deduction phases out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$75,000 (\$150,000 for joint filers).

**Qualifying taxpayers:** To qualify for the additional deduction, a taxpayer must attain age 65 on or before the last day of the taxable year.

**Taxpayer eligibility:** Deduction is available for both itemizing and non-itemizing taxpayers.

Information available: <https://www.irs.gov/one-big-beautiful-bill-act-tax-deductions>



HSHS  
**St. Anthony's**  
Memorial Hospital



*present*

### **St. Anthony's Savvy Senior Program and Luncheon Series**

Senior Services of Effingham County-Activity Center  
209 South Merchant Street, Effingham



**Thursday, March 19, 2026**  
**Thursday, May 21, 2026**  
**Thursday, July 16, 2026**  
**Thursday, September 17, 2026**  
**Thursday, November 19, 2026**



## February 2026 MENU

Friends  
Food  
Fellowship

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 Chili Crackers ½ Peanut Butter Sandwich Asian Cole Slaw w/Ramen Noodles Apricots	3 Fried Chicken Mashed Potatoes Mixed Vegetables Strawberries w/bananas Whole Grain Roll	4 Beef Pepper Steak Over Rice Stewed Tomatoes Warm Peach Crisp	5 Pork Roast Roasted Rosemary Potatoes Asparagus Mandarin Oranges Oatmeal Raisin Cookie	6 Turkey w/dressing Peas Tossed Salad w/tomatoes Warm Spiced Apples Whole Grain Bread
9 Biscuits & Gravy Sausage Patty Hash Brown Casserole Banana Orange Juice	10 Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce Tossed Salad w/tomatoes 3 Bean Salad Strawberries Garlic Bread Stick	11 Ham & Au gratin Potato Casserole Carrots Peas Jell-O w/ Fruit Cocktail Whole Grain Roll	12 Roast Beef Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Apricots Peanut Butter Cookie	13 Salmon Burger Creamy Potatoes Broccoli Pineapple Chunks Whole Grain Bread
16 <b>CLOSED For President's Day</b>	17 Meatloaf Baked Potato Succotash Blushing Pears Whole Grain Roll	18 Broccoli Cheese Soup Crackers ½ Turkey Sandwich on Whole Grain Bread Apple Cabbage Slaw Fruit Cocktail	19 Chicken & Noodles Tossed Salad w/tomatoes California Blend Cherry Crisp	20 Fish on Bun Broccoli Rice Casserole Baked Beans Orange
23 Smothered Grilled Chicken Breast Broccoli Carrots Jell-O w/pears Garlic Bread	24 Sloppy Joes on Bun Potato Wedges Calico Beans Pineapple	25 Old Fashioned Beef Stew Cottage Cheese Cole Slaw Cinnamon Applesauce Corn Muffin	26 Baked Ham Hash Brown Casserole Peas Banana Whole Grain Roll	27 Tater Tot Casserole Green Beans Stewed Tomatoes Peaches
<b>FINAL</b>				<b>2% Milk, Bread, and Margarine are served with every meal. Substitutes will only be made in emergencies.</b>
<b>CALL THE DAY BEFORE TO RESERVE A MEAL</b> <u><b>Suggested Donation \$4.75/Meal</b></u>				
<b>Effingham 217-994-0614   Dieterich 217-994-0461   Altamont 217-994-6561</b>				
<b>Beecher City 217-994-0661   Flora 217-994-3191   Vandalia 618-283-1040</b>				
<b>Ramsey 217-994-6189   Pana 217-562-5611   Taylorville 217-287-7268</b>				
<b>Kincaid 217-237-4328   Teutopolis 217-994-3334</b>				

\*Items on this menu may include or have been prepared in a facility where major food allergens such as milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, soybeans, or sesame are present. For further information about allergens, please contact a Meals on Wheels staff member.

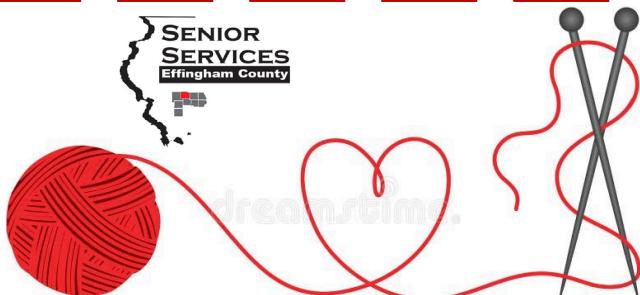


# SHIP

## (Senior Health Insurance Program)

Senior Services staff is available to assist Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers with insurance counseling. Please call (217)347-5569 to make an appointment.

"This publication has been created or produced by Senior Services of Effingham County with financial assistance, in whole or in part, through a grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Federal Medicare agency".



**Come join us  
to knit or  
crochet on  
Wednesday  
afternoons at  
1:00 pm.**



**Line Dancing!!**  
**Join the line dancers  
every Tuesday Morning at  
10:00 am in our  
Activity Center.  
Come and join in the fun  
and learn a new step or  
two!!**

## Having Trouble Finding a Ride?

Let **ECPT** take you where you need to go!

Call to Schedule Your Ride Today!

**1-855-755-2478**

### GET ON THE BUS & RIDE WITH Us!!

IN-COUNTY  
TRANSPORTS  
\$3 per one-way trip

MONTHLY PASS  
Monthly Pass \$35  
Disabled Pass \$15

DISCOUNT  
TICKETS  
Book of 10 \$20  
(No Expiration Date)

SENIORS  
Ride for Free  
Donations  
are accepted

DISPATCH HOURS  
Monday-Friday from 6am-6pm  
TRANSPORTATION HOURS  
Monday-Saturday from 6am-8pm

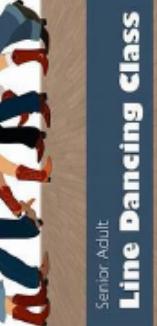
Effingham  
County  
Public  
Transportation

OPEN TO  
EVERYONE!!



Effingham County operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. To find out more about our nondiscrimination obligations or to file a complaint, please contact us at (217)347-4990 or via the web at <http://www.cetsec.org/CIFT/CPPT.htm>

# February 2026 Activity Center Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 1:00 Cards & Mahjong 	3 10:00 Line Dancing 	4 1:00 Games 	5 1:00 Games 	6 1:00 Bingo Sponsor: 
9 1:00 Cards & Mahjong 	10 10:00 Line Dancing 	11 1:00 Games 	12 11:00 Dine With A Doc  Featuring: Emily Konrad, APRN HSHS Medical Group-Urology 	13 1:00 Bingo Sponsor: 
16 WE WILL BE CLOSED ON PRESIDENT'S DAY 	17 10:00 Line Dancing 	18 1:00 Games 	19 Senior Activity Center Presents: "Teacup Gardening" with Linda Heynen-Master Gardener 1:00-2:00 pm 	20 1:00 Bingo Sponsor: 
23 1:00 Cards & Mahjong 	24 10:00 Line Dancing 	25 1:00 Games 	26 1:00 Birthday Party with cake & ice cream Provided by: The Villas of Holly Brook 	27 1:00 Bingo Sponsor: 

Please remember to call 217-347-5569 to sign up for our special events.

**Deadline is Monday at noon on the week of the event!**