

Director's Report

August 2026

Programming Board Report

Meals served July 1- July 31, 2026: 1,087

Breakfast: 54; Lunch: 1,033

January 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026: 7,148

Breakfast: 322; Lunch: 6,826

Volunteer Hours: July 1 – July 31, 2026

- Volunteer Driving: 111
- SHIP: 3.25
- Servers: 103
- World Horizon: 160
- Programming Volunteers: 0
- Kitchen Volunteer: 22

Social: June 1 – June 30, 2026

- Exercise Participants: 275
- Social: 332
- Art & Culture: 14

Programming Update:

- OCCOA had a booth in downtown Hart for the Hart Sparks celebration on July 2, 2026. Gwen and Brad were at the booth answering questions.
- Mary, with a group of volunteers, picked up garbage along OCCOA's two mile stretch during the Adopt-a-Highway clean-up week, which is done three times a year during the spring, summer, and early fall months.
- The OCCOA Annual Pie Auction took place on July 15th, and it was another great success. Like every year, the last pie auction off was put in my face by my brother. The \$1,911 raised was put into our Unmet Needs fund.
- A trip to Downtown Holland to the Farmers Market and shopping was enjoyed; Everyone who went was very happy with the trip and wants to take other day trips to visit towns along the lakeshore.
- OCCOA partnered with Health Department of Northern Michigan and hosted Senior Smiles, where guests could sit and meet a dental hygienist who was looking for head, neck, and oral cancer. They made recommendations if any guest needed to see a dentist. Additionally, they had informational displays and lots of swag to give out. This clinic was free to our guests and was made possible with funds through the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, the Oceana Community Foundation, and Delta Dental.

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- The OCCOA garden looks amazing and is going strong. If you have not been out to see it, please stop by. Fresh produce is being brought in every day, and the guests truly enjoy fresh vegetables to take home. Bradley helped many seniors sign up for Senior Project Fresh this year; who then received a \$25.00 prepaid card valid through October to purchase fresh produce at participating locations. The OCCOA garden helps to bridge the gap and allows guests access to more fresh vegetables. Another huge thank you to the amazing group of volunteers and 4-H youth who work tirelessly on the garden.
- The Biltmore bus trip will be this October. Three new trips are on the schedule for 2027, and travelers have already started signing up, including Amelia Island, St. Augustine, Jacksonville, FL, and surrounding areas; Santa Fe and the Grand Canyon, and Las Vegas and the Hoover Dam.
- Bradley has started the process of becoming a Certified Senior Center Program Manager through MASC, the Michigan Association of Senior Centers.
- Through a generous donation in Memory of Mike and Susan Castor, Bradley has signed up for a Facilitator Training Course with Opening Minds through Art. Opening Minds through Art is an award-winning, evidence-based, intergenerational art-making program for people living with dementia. When finished, Bradley will not only be able to present classes to individuals with dementia, but also train others interested in the program. Bradley has started online classes and looks forward to learning and finishing this course.

Senior Care Services Update:

Our Friends House (Adult Day Services)

July 2026 OFH Totals

- **Client Hours:** 205.5
- **Meals Served:** 52
- **OCCOA Rides (OFH Clients):** 46

Activities and Program Highlights

Our Friends House Adult Day Center (OFH) friends have spent the past month enjoying meaningful time together, building friendships, exploring the outdoors, and creating plenty of memories along the way. Recent activities have included water balloon tosses, a bubble extravaganza, gardening, learning about flowers and birds, enjoying pie, sharing laughter, and strengthening continued friendships.

We are also thrilled to welcome two new friends to OFH! Both have jumped right in and are becoming an active part of the OFH community. We are excited to see their friendships grow and to watch them enjoy all that OFH has to offer.

Strengthening Family Connections:

OFH staff have continued to enhance communication with families and loved ones by creating monthly newsletters and engaging photo slideshows highlighting activities, celebrations, and everyday moments at the center. This new approach to communication has been a tremendous hit

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with both our friends and their families, helping loved ones feel more connected to the experiences taking place at OFH.

Looking Ahead: Fair Week!

We are especially excited for Fair Week! Our friends have different preferences when it comes to attending the actual fair, and OFH is making sure everyone has the opportunity to participate in a way that works best for them. Some friends have chosen to stay at OFH, while others are looking forward to being front and center at the fairgrounds.

Whether our friends attend the fair or celebrate at OFH, everyone will have the chance to enjoy fair-themed activities, favorite fair foods, laughter, and time together, with activities and foods adapted to individual preferences and needs.

At OFH, we continue to focus on what matters most: friendship, inclusion, meaningful experiences, choice, and creating joyful moments together.



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Community Living Support

July 2026 CLS Totals

- **Client Hours: 406.25**

Our Community Living Support (CLS) staff continue to be busy providing essential assistance to seniors in their homes. Their dedication, compassion, and commitment to quality service play an important role in helping seniors throughout Oceana County remain independent and age in place. We are incredibly grateful for the CLS team and the care they provide each day. Their work reflects the mission of the Council on Aging through their willingness to go above and beyond for the seniors they serve. Their caring approach and genuine compassion make a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients and their families.

We are pleased to report that the CLS waitlist remains minimal, with only two clients currently awaiting services. Staff continue to work diligently to connect individuals with services as quickly as possible while maintaining the quality and individualized support our clients deserve.

Bathing Program

The Bathing Program continues to remain steady with our current client base, providing consistent support and personal care services to seniors in the community. Participants continue to benefit from regular bathing assistance in a safe, comfortable, and respectful environment. Staff remain committed to maintaining high-quality care while ensuring clients' dignity, comfort, and well-being. We appreciate the continued trust our clients and families place in this valuable program.

- **Spa appointments in July 2026: 26**

SHIP Medicare Counseling

The SHIP Medicare team is preparing for the upcoming **Medicare Open Enrollment** period. Staff are actively participating in additional trainings and webinars, while keeping up with the latest Medicare updates and changes to ensure they are prepared to provide accurate, timely, and individualized assistance to the community.

We are also excited to offer a **Medicare 101** educational session in the coming months. This opportunity will provide individuals with a chance to ask questions, better understand their Medicare options, and receive guidance as they navigate the enrollment process.

Please look forward to upcoming communications with details about the Medicare 101 session and other SHIP Medicare resources. We look forward to helping community members feel informed and confident in their Medicare decisions.

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Transportation Update:

	JULY 2025	JULY 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD INCREASE
BUS MILES	8,295	9,567	53,870	59,225	5,355
NON-SENIOR TRIPS	15	26	97	143	46
SENIOR TRIPS	142	275	1,520	1,762	242
NON-SENIOR DISABLED TRIPS	203	226	1,375	1,455	80
SENIOR DISABLED TRIPS	445	374	2,991	2,501	-490
TOTAL TRIPS	805	901	5,983	5,861	-122
PARATRANSIT MILES	568	1,277	4,970	5,751	781
TOTAL ASSIGNMENTS	5	11	51	60	9
VOLUNTEER MILES	6,648	3,493	33,853	19,133	-14,720
TOTAL TRIPS	141	79	754	407	-347

Transit Operations & Ridership Summary (Through July 31)

- **Trip Volume vs. Mileage:** Overall trip volume is down by 122 trips year-over-year. However, total vehicle miles increased over the same period. This reflects a notable rise in transport demand from the outer reaches of the county (including Walkerville and the southern border areas of Claybanks and Grant Townships), requiring longer transit runs per client.
- **Out-of-County Paratransit Reporting:** Out-of-county paratransit is now tracked and reported by **vehicle assignments (service runs)** rather than individual passenger trips. This provides a clearer, more accurate measure of dedicated vehicle deployments to out-of-county medical appointments.
- **Volunteer Driver Program**
 - **Passenger Trip Reporting:** Volunteer transportation continues to be reported by individual passenger trips due to scheduling software limitations that do not aggregate volunteer routes into standard vehicle run assignments.
 - **Ridership Trends & Grant Funding Structure:** Passenger trip numbers are down compared to last year. While our standard program policy has always required a cost-share of \$0.25 per mile, we previously utilized United Way grant funding to fully cover this fee, which created a surge in ride demand. United Way has redirected grant focus to housing and youth; Due to a reduced grant award this cycle, OCCOA limited the subsidy to **one free trip per rider per month**, with riders responsible for the standard \$0.25 per mile on additional rides. This reduction in fully subsidized trips has contributed to the lower trip volume compared to prior peaks.
 - **Funding Timeline:** Although the official grant cycle runs through December, high community utilization will exhaust our remaining grant funds by the end of August or

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early September. Once these funds are fully depleted, all volunteer rides will return to the standard \$0.25 per mile cost-share.

Professional Development

Stephanie and Lisa attended the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA) Annual Conference, participating in educational sessions, agency presentations, and technical briefings with state and federal transit leadership:

- **State & Federal Agency Sessions:** Attended presentations with representatives from **MDOT, TSA, and FTA Region 5**, covering regulatory updates, compliance expectations, safety standards, and regional funding opportunities. The presentations were comprehensive and addressed key operational questions during the session.
- **Organizational Health & Resilience:** Participated in sessions focused on **Managing Burnout, Developing Individual and Organizational Resilience, and Board Development**. These sessions offered actionable tools to help manage leadership sustainability and prevent personal burnout in high-demand administrative roles, while also providing strategies to support our staff.
- **Technology & Planning:** Attended technical briefings and demonstrations on the new **MDOT Multi-Modal tools**.

How the MDOT Multi-Modal Tool Applies to Specialized Services While this state platform is primarily designed for regional networks and fixed-route systems, it offers specific value for how our demand-response, Specialized Services program interfaces with state planning:

- **Highlighting Rural Transit Deserts:** Because OCCOA operates specialized, demand-response transportation rather than fixed bus lines, the tool visually proves where traditional public transit ends—clearly documenting that OCCOA specialized vans and volunteer drivers are the *only* link connecting rural seniors to essential destinations.
- **Data Justification for Specialized Funding:** The platform overlays senior demographics, low-income households, and zero-vehicle areas against general transit routes. We can use this state-verified data to back up our annual Specialized Services funding requests and capital vehicle grant applications by showing the high concentration of transit-dependent seniors in Oceana County.
- **Evaluating Regional Healthcare Gaps:** The mapping tool helps demonstrate the extensive distance between the OCCOA service area and out-of-county regional medical hubs, providing concrete travel-shed data to illustrate why specialized, local medical transit (and local facilities like dialysis) is urgently needed.

New Opportunities

OCCOA looks forward to the opportunity to partner with local Trinity Health staff as a **premier transportation provider** for their upcoming rural health grant application. Since stepping into the Transportation Director role three years ago, Stephanie and Lisa have been working to establish communication channels with Trinity regarding our region's transportation barriers. While this collaboration is currently with local Trinity staff rather than health system executive leadership, building a strong operational track record through this grant is an essential first step toward gaining a true seat at the table with upper leadership in the future.

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Operational & Financial Safeguards

- **MDOT Coordination:** Lisa has consulted with OCCOA MDOT Project Manager regarding how to properly structure and move forward with this grant proposal, reviewing the operational boundaries to ensure full compliance with state and federal transit guidelines.
- **Service Role:** OCCOA will serve as a premier provider of non-emergency medical transportation for eligible patients under Trinity's grant program.
- **Full Cost Recovery:** This service will operate entirely on a fee-for-service model fully funded by the grant. Rates are structured to cover 100% of all costs including driver wages, fuel, vehicle maintenance, and dispatch/administrative overhead.
- **Fund Protection:** In line with MDOT guidance, no local OCCOA millage dollars or MDOT Specialized Services allocations will be used to support these rides.
- **Contract Execution:** Once the grant is approved, OCCOA will coordinate directly with Trinity to finalize and execute a formal Premier Services contract defining billing rates, dispatch procedures, and service parameters prior to launch.

Community Impact & Future Dialysis Advocacy Partnering with local Trinity personnel creates a direct avenue to demonstrate our county's most critical healthcare gap: **the lack of local dialysis services.**

- **The Local Dilemma:** Because there are no dialysis centers located in Oceana County, patients must travel out of county three or more days every week for life-sustaining treatment.
- **Volunteer Constraints:** OCCOA relies on volunteer drivers for out-of-county rides, but they simply do not have the capacity—nor can they take on the demanding commitment—of transporting someone out of county multiple days a week for strict, non-negotiable appointments that cannot be missed. We only assist on an occasional basis.
- **Long-Term Objective:** By collaborating on this grant, OCCOA can share concrete transit data with local Trinity contacts in hopes that the information reaches health system decision-makers. Bringing a dialysis facility directly into Oceana County would shorten trip lengths to local runs, finally allowing OCCOA buses and staff drivers to routinely, reliably transport county seniors to their life-saving care.

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July 2026 Community Outreach & Development Update:

July was a busy month preparing grant applications and planning upcoming events and activities with the programming team!

We had two outreach events this month: the Hart Sparks Booth and the New Era Farmer's Market. Gwen also attended several training and community meetings, including the monthly Safe Seniors cohort, the West Michigan Migrant Resource Center meeting, and training with the Michigan Association of Senior Centers focused on fundraising and development initiatives.

OCCOA is excited to be awarded a \$750 grant from Kids Gardening to support our community garden and are in the process of writing a second grant application to the ACL, which would provide funding specifically for accessibility improvements to the garden.

Another grant application in progress is the Senior Resources Health and Wellness Grant, requesting funding to support the Stay Active and Independent for Life exercise program, as well as a Medicare 101 class and a Dementia Friends class.

OCCOA signed up for a new donor management platform called Little Green Light. This platform will help streamline giving processes, track donor thank-you messages, send email blasts, and more. San Juanita and Kay have been helping gather donor information from previous years so it can be transferred it into the new platform. Having all of this information in one place will give a much better picture of donor history and help strengthen fundraising efforts moving forward.

For a little fun from July: On July 3rd, OCCOA received word from a community partner that an ice cream truck had broken down! Gwen and her husband were able to "rescue" what was estimate was a thousand dollars' worth of ice cream, packed it into the OCCOA's freezers, and in less than two days, were able to distribute it to seniors throughout the community.

It was certainly a delicious surprise! The staff was so happy to be able to turn an unexpected situation into a fun treat for the seniors.

Community Outreach & Engagement

Outreach Activities

Date	Event/Activity	Audience	Attendance/Reach
7/2/26	Hart Sparks Booth	All Ages	50
7/28/26	New Era Farmer's Market	All Ages	22

Grants/Funding Opportunities

- Grants submitted: DTE Energy for Transportation, AARP for new bath
- Grants awarded: Kids Gardening Grant, Senior Resources Health & Wellness grant (Dementia Friends and SAIL)
- In process: ACL Accessibility Improvement Gardening Grant
- New Donor platform—Little Green Light
 - In the process of transferring donor data to the platform to better track donations, grants, and other giving. The platform also has the capability to send email blasts and newsletters.
- End of Year giving campaign planning has begun.

Press Releases/Marketing

- 102.7 WMOM—Live interview for the Pie Auction
- Press Release—Caregiver Support Group

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- Press Release—Pie Auction Follow Up

Social Media

- Facebook—Oceana County Council on Aging and Our Friends House
 - Made the decision to combine the Our Friends House and OCCOA page. This will help with confusion that the two are separate entities. Our Friends House will be regularly featured on Fridays plus additional days as needed on the combined Facebook page. Family photos will be shared regularly in a group page that can easily be found on the OCCOA page. This group page is only for family members and their approved friends. This will follow other daycare setting privacy best practices. All OFH families were notified of this change and given instructions on how to join the group. OFH families were also notified that some photos will still be shared on the public Facebook page to promote and support Our Friends House, but families can opt out of those posts by talking with Jaccie or Kim. All participants and/or their caregiver sign a photo release.
- Instagram—Oceana County Council on Aging

Monthly Metrics

Platform	Posts	Views	Engagement	Followers Gained
Facebook	47	62.0K (Up 12%)	1.3k (Down 8.5%)	33 (Up 26.9%)
Instagram	27	17.6K (87.6%)	15 (down 57.6%)	0 new followers

- Social media posts: 70
- Total viewers: 12.1k (up 22%)
- Total engagement: 1.3k
- Press releases issued: 2 (Caregiver Support Group and the Pie Auction)

Top Performing Content

1. Free Hudsonville Ice Cream Announcement 10,121 views & 6,272 reach
2. Pie Auction Thank You Video 4,388 views & 3,927 reach
3. Ryan's Staff Spotlight 3,135 views & 1,679 reach

Website Management

Gwen continues to make updates to the website, specifically to improve ADA accessibility and make the site more user-friendly. All new trips are now posted on the website and available for registration. There was also a recent WordPress update that shifted a few things around on the site. Gwen has been working with Linus (past World Horizon volunteer and current tech volunteer) to address the changes and make sure everything is functioning properly and remains easy for visitors to navigate.

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- The OCCOA garden continues to grow, both in produce as well as in space! The 4-H kids have been a huge help. A very big "THANK YOU" to Doug Bacon, Lew Bancroft, and Mark Butcher for their contributions.

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- Donations continue to come in from individuals and groups and are used to offset the cost of programs and equipment, etc.
- Stephanie and Lisa attended the joint MDOT/Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA) conference August 17-19, attending workshops addressing agency resiliency and burnout, which were offered through multiple speakers, as these topics are big in the public service sector. They also received MDOT updates, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) updates. The conference also allowed time to talk with other transit agencies, share best practices, struggles, and be supportive of the missions we serve.
- Stephanie continues to work closely with Senior Resources, the Area Agency on Aging which covers Oceana, Muskegon, and Ottawa Counties, ensuring the highest quality services are provided to our area seniors.
- Stephanie attended Michigan Association of Senior Centers office hours on August 10.
- OCCOA held two successful clinics with Senior Smiles, providing head, neck, and oral cancer screenings, dental referrals, professional consultations, all provided by registered dental hygienists. Free sonic toothbrushes and other giveaways were provided to attendees. This program is funded by Health Department of Northern Michigan and Oceana Community Foundation and is free to the senior community.
 - A patient was found to have an issue, and had been trying to get into a dentist, but the wait was MONTHS. Due to the severity of the situation, and with the help of this program, they were able to be seen immediately, since it was on the verge of life threatening and because of this partnership, they were able to receive the vital care they needed.
- Clara, OCCOA's 2025-2026 World Horizon Volunteer has returned to Germany after spending the last year with OCCOA. The staff and seniors miss her already but are excited to follow her college journey.
- The 2026-2027 World Horizon Volunteers will be arriving in September. This next year, OCCOA will again be hosting two volunteers, who will be spending their time working with seniors both at the main center as well as Our Friends House.
- OCCOA received three grants through Senior Resources which will help fund the popular SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life) class, Dementia Friends Training, and a small portion of Transportation.
- OCCOA continues to be a proud partner of the Trinity Health Farm Share program, which is a produce subscription program, bringing fresh, locally grown produce to the community. OCCOA is a host site, providing space to welcome recipients of the CSA a place to pick up their supplies.

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- OCCOA hosted members of the Michigan Dyslexia Institute for six days during their training over the last three weeks.
- OCCOA has been invited to be a part of the Community Walkability & Active Transportation Capacity Building Workshop being put on by District Health Department #10 and Trinity Health.
- Research into new chairs for the dining room is being done. The current chairs are 15 years old and several of them have been removed due to breakage. A very generous donation has been made to help offset the cost of the purchase of new chairs.