

# Celebrating Independence and History In New York City



**Members of Anderson Older Adult Center celebrated Black History Month with a live performance of Harriet Tubman on Staten Island.**

Celebrating older New Yorkers' history and heritage, while providing them with the resources they need to age independently, is a theme NYC Aging and our community partners do all year round. In February, we celebrate Black History Month and National Older Adult Independence Month, while never losing site of NYC Aging's goal to foster an age inclusive city.

Some of the events taking place to celebrate Black History Month include the West Brighton Older Adult Center on Staten Island remembering Harriet Tubman during a special live performance; in Brooklyn, the Bay Ridge Older Adult Center had one of its interns lead a discussion about Soul Train, one of the first

television shows owned and produced by an African American; and JASA Bartow Older Adult Center in the Bronx created art that represented something significant to their members about Black History.

Art classes don't just take place during Black History Month though. Did you know that practicing art enhances brain function? That's why they take place all year round. This is in addition to physical work outs like Tai Chi and Chair exercises, that are organized so members have every opportunity to be active in any way they choose. Congregate meals are also provided every day, and for Black History Month, some of the centers served traditional African food to recognize the culture.

With over 300 older adult centers across the five boroughs, members can learn even more about their history by using the computers that are available in their community, get the forms to sign up for city services and participate in online activities, which is all part of making sure they can age with dignity.

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) have programs allowing even more older New Yorkers to live in their community, because they have access to social service providers right in their neighborhood. They provide connections to in-home care services, make sure residents are signed up for the benefits they deserve, provide opportunities to meet

individually with a healthcare professional, and organize free health programs like blood pressure screenings.

Personally, I'm proud to be one of the estimated one-million caregivers in New York City who also play an integral role allowing their loved ones to age independently. At NYC Aging, we continue to work to make it easier for caregivers to balance all the other responsibilities they have. Whether it is through respite or long-term care, or counseling to help alleviate the stress they may be feeling, there are resources that they can access.

For every holiday and birthday we celebrate, we should continue to spend it with family and friends, in a community we can call home. If your culture has a holiday coming up, or you want to participate in

programs or access resources, it's possible by either visiting our website ([www.agin.nyc.gov](http://www.agin.nyc.gov)) or by following our social media sites on Facebook (@NewYorkCityAging), Instagram and Twitter (@NYCAging), to stay up to date on what is taking place in your community, all year long.



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