



Schuylkill County Senior Community Centers

Member Handbook

 **DIAKON** COMMUNITY SERVICES
DIAKON CHILD, FAMILY & COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Schuylkill County Senior Community Centers

Mahanoy City Senior Community Center

138 West Centre Street
Mahanoy City, PA 17948
570-773-0738

Pottsville Senior Community Center

201 North Centre Street
Pottsville, PA 17901
570-628-3513

Schuylkill Haven Senior Community Center

340 Haven Street
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972
570-385-5611

Shenandoah Senior Community Center

116 North Main Street
Shenandoah, PA 17976
570-462-1965

Tremont Senior Community Center

139 Clay Street
Tremont, PA 17981
570-695-3500

Diakon Community Services manages the Schuylkill County Senior Centers under a contract with the Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services with funding provided by the PA Department of Aging.

Inside this handbook:

Introduction	4
Center Membership	6
Eligibility	7
Attendance and Participation	8
Meals - Activities	
Policies: Political Neutrality, Solicitation, Confidentiality, Phone Usage	9
Computer and Internet	10
Health and Safety	11
Code of Conduct	12
Weather / Emergency Cancellations	16
Holidays Observed	
Handbook Acknowledgement	Attachments
Computer and Internet Acknowledgment	

*Although activities are geared for the 60+ individual,
you need not be aged 60 to participate in activities.*

We Are Glad You Are Here!

It gives us great pleasure in welcoming you to the Schuylkill County Senior Community Centers. Schuylkill County is fortunate to have five Senior Community Centers – Mahanoy City, Pottsville, Schuylkill Haven, Shenandoah, and Tremont all offering you a wide variety of programs, activities, and opportunities. You are welcome to visit and enjoy all centers from 8AM-2PM and 8AM-4PM in Mahanoy City. Each center has its own personality; however, all have one thing in common – a commitment to the seniors in our communities. Our centers play a key role in connecting older adults to vital community services that can help you stay healthy and independent. Our goal is to fill many needs – social, physical, recreational, emotional and intellectual.

Aside from your appetite, we encourage you to bring your interests, talents, skills, and willingness to try various activities. Whether you participate in an exercise program, play bingo, test your creativity, gain new computer skills or enjoy an outing, you have the opportunity to make new friends or rekindle old friendships.

A nutritious lunch is served every weekday between 11:30-12:30 (lunch may be offered if you arrive at a later time). Menus and nutritional information is posted at the center. Information on reserving meals and cost can be found on page 8.

Transportation to and from the Center is arranged through STS (Schuylkill Transportation System). If you are not registered with STS, our staff can help you complete a registration.

Our goal is for you to have a positive and enjoyable experience. This is your center. We would like everyone to understand their responsibilities and the expectations associated with membership in the Senior Community Center. If you have questions about anything, please ask for clarification. We rely on your experience to help us create a vibrant Senior Community Center.

Once again, we welcome you and look forward to getting to know you better!

Karen J. Wood

Executive Director

Diakon Community Services

DeAnna Orlowsky

Executive Administrator

Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services

Mission Statement

Schuylkill County Senior Community Centers engage community seniors and encourage a positive and enriching atmosphere both in the Center and throughout our community.

Vision Statement

Our center promotes healthy aging, encourages positive dialogue among staff, members and the larger community, advocates a passion for learning, and encourages healthy life styles through good nutrition, exercise and wellness programs. The Senior Center strives to provide a safe and nurturing environment to all who come through our doors.

Background Information

The Schuylkill County Senior Community Centers are managed by Diakon Community Services under a contract with the Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services. Diakon Community Services is a program within Diakon Child, Family and Community Ministries, a Lutheran Social Ministry Organization, and has been managing the centers since 1995. Diakon's mission is to demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.

Diakon Values

Respect: All people are unique gifts of God to be valued.

Stewardship: We are responsible to God, the church, and society for the use of all our precious resources.

Service: All work that affirms God's creation has worth and dignity.

Quality: Teamwork, continual learning, and innovation enhance the quality of service.

Funding Sources

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging provides funding for senior centers to the Office of Senior Services (OSS). Through Diakon's contract with the OSS we are reimbursed for the majority of our services. Additional funding comes from fundraising efforts and donations. All members are provided an opportunity to donate towards the cost of meals and center programming. At times, special programs or meals may be offered that are not covered under the contract and in those cases, a fee may be charged for those wishing to participate.

Center Membership

Center Membership is defined as those who are 60 and older and have completed a registration packet. There is no fee for membership; however, there may be fees charged for certain programs, activities or trips offered through the center. If a fee is to be charged, it will be posted at the center. Non-members may participate in all activities of the center; however, members receive priority in registering for events that are limited in attendance.

Registration

All members will be asked to complete an annual registration packet. The packet includes a registration form, emergency contact information a nutritional screening and an STS form for those 65+. The forms are self-declaration. Diakon staff is available for assistance in completing these forms. Registration is free.

Non-Discrimination Practices Policy

It is the policy of the Senior Center to provide services to residents age 60 and older and to anyone seeking services on behalf of a resident aged 60 and older. Our services are available to people regardless of race, color, religion, creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or sexual orientation or any other classes protected by law and in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws. Members with complaints of unlawful discrimination, questions and comments can directed to the Executive Director of Diakon Community Services.

Eligibility

Senior centers are designed to serve the 60+ population. Any Schuylkill County resident 60 and over is eligible to become a registered member of the center.

Our policy requires that those participating in center services/activities are physically and/or cognitively capable of participating independently or accompanied by a companion to assist. The Senior Center Manager, in consultation with additional staff of Diakon and the Office of Senior Services, reserves the right to assess the ability of potential members to safely use the Senior Center. This is done to ensure the health and well-being of all members. *A companion may be an aide, family member, friend, etc.

Should a member need to be accompanied, the guidelines are as follows:

- A. Members must be accompanied at all times.
- B. In the event that the companion does not provide adequate assistance or leaves the member at the center, staff will contact the emergency contact on file. If that individual is unavailable, staff will notify the Office of Senior Services.
- C. Members whose cognitive or physical limitations exceed an aide's, companion or family member's ability to safely assist a member in center activities, they will be referred to the Office of Senior Services. In those instances, members will be asked to refrain from attending the center until the situation is resolved. Manager must be notified member of resolution prior to returning to center.
- D. Failure to abide by this plan may result in exclusion from participation in Senior Center activities until a resolution is found.

Some situations may include, but are not limited to:

Wandering	Inability to toilet independently
Poor personal hygiene	Behavioral health issues
Abusive or harmful behavior	Chronic unmanaged incontinence
Drug or alcohol abuse	Regular occurring seizures
Cognitive impairment	Chronic contagious disease

Attendance and Participation

Residents age 60+ are welcome to attend the center during center hours. Members and guests are required to sign in each day they attend.

Meals

Individuals age 60 (and spouses under age 60 when accompanying them), and registered volunteers under age 60 may reserve (and receive) a meal without charge; *however, donations are encouraged and gratefully accepted.* Suggested donations are posted by the collection box. All donations are anonymous. All other individuals may reserve and purchase a meal at full price. All meals must be reserved one business day in advance through the Center Manager/Assistant. *Continued neglect to not call or show up for a reserved meal may result in not having the ability to be served the menued meal for that day.*

Activities

A variety of activities are offered by the center and published in monthly activity calendars, which are posted at the center. Members may be asked to register for certain activities. Non-members may participate in all activities of the center but members receive priority in registering for events that are limited in attendance. Once the time-frame has passed for member event registration, non-members may register as space permits and on a first come, first served basis. Although most activities are offered at no cost, *donations for programming are encouraged and gratefully accepted. Anonymous donations may be placed in the donation box.* An additional cost for programs not funded by the Older American Act may be charged to non-county residents.

Political Neutrality Policy

It is the policy of the senior community center to remain neutral on any political topic and candidate. Political forums are permitted when facilitated as a Senior Center program.

Solicitation Policy

The center will adhere to a no solicitation policy. Guests, members, presenters, etc. shall refrain from selling any products, services, etc., to center members. This includes, but is not limited to, service providers, community or civic organizations, for profit and not-for profit agencies. Center fundraisers are excluded from this policy.

Confidentiality Policy

Diakon has very strict policies and procedures to protect your privacy in accordance with State laws. All records are confidential and maintained accordingly. The center, nor Diakon, will release information about you to anyone without your prior written consent. The member agrees to the sharing of information with the Office of Senior Services.

Activities/Presentations:

Center staff is responsible for planning and implementing the activities that are provided to center members and visitors. Our community partners are essential to our programming and members should be attentive and respectful during presentations.

Phone Usage:

The center's phone is to be used for business purposes. Members are asked to refrain from using the center phone for personal business. Should any member need to use the phone, please ask center staff or volunteer. Incoming phone calls are to be answered by staff /or appointed volunteers.

Computers and Internet:

The use of computers and internet is provided to all center volunteers and visitors at no cost. You will be requested to sign the computer policy and “sign in” for computer usage. Center staff reserves the right to limit the amount of time an individual may use the computer in the event users outnumber available computers.

Computer Usage:

In order to provide the most current information available, Diakon Community Services will provide access to center computers during center hours. This service is a privilege and not a right. All center members will respect the rules so this service can continue uninterrupted. It is the center member’s responsibility to abide by the computer usage agreement. A signed Computer/Internet Agreement must be on file before using a workstation. Any violation of the agreement may result in losing computer privileges.

Computer rules:

- a. A signed computer use agreement must be on file before computer privileges are given
- b. Session is limited to one hour
- c. Nothing can be saved on the computers
- d. Do not install or download any programs
- e. Do not damage computer equipment or software
- f. Computer settings may not be changed
- g. No food or drink near workstations or when using tablets
- h. Notify the center manager immediately of any problems/issues

Diakon Community Services will not assume any responsibility for damages, direct or indirect, arising from the use of electronic services through our system, including the Internet.

Internet Usage:

Diakon Community Services is providing Internet Access in order for members to obtain information in a timely manner. However we cannot be responsible for the information obtained through the Internet. It is each person's responsibility to determine the validity of the information. The Senior Center is an inappropriate place to view violence, nudity, pornography, and sexually explicit material. The Internet should not be used for any criminal purpose. Anyone using the Internet must have a signed Computer/Internet Agreement on file.

Internet rules:

- a. All of the computer use rules apply - see above
- b. Do not download any programs
- c. Do not conduct illegal business
- d. Do not violate copyright laws or software license restrictions
- e. Sexually explicit sites are strictly prohibited

Health and Safety

- a. The senior center is a NON SMOKING facility. There is no smoking inside or on the sidewalks surrounding the building or entrances to the center.
- b. If members are ill, seek medical attention and remain at home. When at the center, members are encouraged to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.
- c. Pets are not permitted inside or outside the building except during approved programs. Service animals are an exception. A service animal is any dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals. Animals providing emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship are not considered works or tasks under the definition of a service animal.
- d. Due to allergies/sensitivities members are asked to refrain from the following:
 1. Wearing strong perfumes and colognes.
 2. Latex based products (gloves, balloons, etc.)

- e. The center is a licensed food service establishment. For the safety of all and to comply with State and local health codes only staff member and volunteers who have been properly trained may assist with the preparation, packaging and serving of meals.
- f. A staff member/volunteer with ServSafe certification oversees all food service operations and enforcement of regulations.

Code of Conduct

The senior community center provides an environment that is welcoming, supportive, and fun for its members, volunteers and guests.

Diakon and the Office of Senior Services adhere to a strict “zero tolerance policy” of harassment and violence in the center. If a member does not abide by this policy, they will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If a violator refuses to leave the premises, the local law enforcement agency will be called. A report will be made for individuals affected by abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment.

The Center Manager may exclude any person who intentionally does not follow the policies created for the health, safety and well-being of all members and staff.

Actions leading up to exclusion are as follows (but not limited to):

- a. Intoxicated individuals will be asked to leave immediately. The emergency contact on file will be contacted.
- b. Possession of or use of illegal substances. The emergency contact will be contacted and police will be notified.
- c. The use of obscene or profane languages, gestures, verbal or physical abuse, and sexual harassment directed at staff, volunteers, another member or guests; this could be gestures, bullying, verbal written or physical in nature.
- d. Verbal or physical abuse. Police will be notified.
- e. Carrying a firearm, knife or any dangerous object that would or could be used to cause another to feel threatened in any way.

- f. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person or oneself. Police will be notified.
- g. Making disparaging remarks to another person about their sex, religion, national origin, gender identification, sexual orientation, marital orientation or race.
- h. Making unauthorized contact with another person.
- i. Repeated and intentional disregard to adhere to the rules, regulations and reasonable directions from staff as set forth in this handbook.
- j. Proper attire must be worn at all times. Provocative or suggestive clothing, graphic shirts containing profanity or sexually suggestive lettering or design are not permitted. Shirts and shoes are required.
- k. Coercing, badgering, soliciting and/or panhandling others for money, rides, etc.
- l. Willful destruction of property (building and/or furnishings); no alterations or additions to the building are permitted.

Should any individual feel that the language or behavior of another member is harmful or threatening to themselves or others, they should bring this to the attention of the center staff.

All conversations will be handled discretely and confidentially when possible.

At any time, however, the local police may need to be notified. Should staff become aware of or observe inappropriate behavior in the Center or at a center sponsored event, the following procedure will be followed:

Verbal Warning - First Offense

A verbal warning is issued when staff considers behavior to be unacceptable. The Center Services Coordinator will hold a meeting with the individual to discuss the behavior; the individual will be told if the behavior happens again it will warrant a written warning. The person signs documentation stating he/she fully understands

the Code of Conduct Policy. If the behavior continues, staff has the authority to ask the individual to leave the building immediately. If the individual refuses to leave, the local law enforcement agency will be called and a written notice shall be sent to the individual and the OSS.

Written Warning - Second Offense

Staff will address the individual about the specific unacceptable behavior. The conversation will be documented and a copy given to the individual. Should the individual refuse to take a copy, one will be mailed to the address on file. The person will be excluded from center activities/events, etc. for a period of one week. The individual will be asked to leave the center immediately. If the person refuses to leave, the local law enforcement agency will be called. OSS will be notified and provided with a copy of the signed documentation. Should the member fail to abide by the exclusion and come into center, they will be asked to leave immediately. Exclusion will extend until member, Center Service Director and OSS staff member meet to discuss behavior and terms for return to center.

Third Offense: If an individual's behavior continues to be unacceptable, the Center Program Coordinator will be notified and the Center Manager will direct the person to leave the premises immediately for such a period as the Manager, Director and OSS staff deem appropriate (subject to the Right of Appeal). During this time, center property and activities at all centers will be "off limits". Should the individual refuse to leave, the local law enforcement agency will be called. A written notice shall be sent to the individual and the OSS.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, depending upon the nature and severity of the violation, the Center Manager and Director of Center Services reserve the right to dispense with the First and Second Offense procedure and immediately proceed in accordance with the Third Offense procedure, subject to the Right of Appeal.

Right of Appeal

Any member who has been excluded from participation in center programs, activities and services may request, in writing, within 10 business days a hearing with the Office of Senior Services. The decision of the OSS will be final, subject to the right of review as set forth in the Grievance Policy below. It is the intent of the Senior Center to arrive at an appropriate resolution.

Grievance Policy

The purpose of the grievance policy is to provide a procedure to assure that a grievance raised by a member will be reviewed and resolved in a timely manner.

The following steps will be taken:

- A. The member notifies the Center Manager of their complaint. A conversation will be held in an effort to find a resolution to the complaint. The meeting will be documented and all parties in attendance will be asked to sign the document. If a resolution has not been agreed upon, then all parties will move to the next step.
- B. If the complaint is not resolved, a request can be made to meet with the Center Services Program Coordinator and the Center Services Director in an attempt to find a resolution to the complaint. The meeting will be documented and all parties will sign the document. If a resolution has not been agreed to, then move to the next step.
- C. If the complaint has not been resolved, a letter of grievance should be written by the member explaining the situation and requesting a meeting with a representative of OSS. The decision of OSS and the OSS Board is final.

Weather / Emergency Cancelations:

Notice of Senior Community Center closing or delays will be announced on the following media. If in doubt, please call your local senior center.

Television: WNEP TV16, WBRE and WYOU

Radio: WPPA AM, T-102 FM, WMGH Magic 105.5 FM

www.facebook.com/SchuylkillCountySeniorCommunityCenters/

Holidays Observed: Centers will be closed

New Year’s Day*	Good Friday	Memorial Day
Summer Center Carnival	Independence Day*	Labor Day
Senior Expo	Thanksgiving	Friday after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day *		

**If holiday falls on a Saturday, center closed Friday;
if holiday falls on a Sunday, center closed Monday.*

For specific dates, please call your local Senior Community Center or refer to our Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/SchuylkillCountySeniorCommunityCenters>



Diakon Community Services manages the Schuylkill County Senior Centers under a contract with the Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services with funding provided by the PA Department of Aging.