

## Staying Socially Engaged Through The Winter Months

The holiday months of November and December offer many opportunities to gather with family and friends in celebration. But, as the dreary days of winter drag on, we often find ourselves staying home or drastically limiting outdoor activities causing feelings of seclusion. We have all heard of the “winter blues,” but how can you combat boredom and loneliness starting now?

A lack of physical activity and social engagement can take a serious toll on your wellbeing. Believe it or not, depression, high blood pressure, diabetes, and decreased bone density are all impacted by your activity level! If your social calendar isn't filling up, then NOW is the time to think outside the box and take the time to focus on making your life the very best it can be.

Here is a list of engaging activities to inspire you:

- **Get moving!** Exercise classes, mall walking groups, or spiritual-based fitness classes, like Tai Chi, promote optimal physical activity. *Bonus*, exercise is proven to improve mood and disposition, too!
- **Join an organized club.** Special-interest groups, Veteran's clubs, spiritual groups, book clubs, etc. can help increase socialization among like-minded peers.
- **Take a trip.** Visit a new or favorite destination. Get out of your comfort zone and meet new people. Often senior living communities, like Traditions of Hanover in Bethlehem, and other senior-focused organizations provide discounted rates or free trips that are open to the public.
- **Learn something new.** Take a cooking, computer, art or music class. Continue challenging your mind by participating in lecture series or educational courses offered through a community college, university or anywhere providing enrichment classes!
- **Volunteer.** Help out at a local church, senior community or center. Or, volunteer at an animal shelter, soup kitchen or hospital. Your time is valuable to a number of people and places. *Plus*, the rewards are often immeasurable!

Aging doesn't mean you need to give up the activities you love. Many individuals (and couples) discover they can lead fulfilling lives at independent senior living communities. Here, they find a variety of social options among like-minded peers, wellness activities to maintain strength and mobility, and the opportunity to continue or rediscover hobbies and interests from earlier in life. The key to finding a good fit in a senior community is to find one that provides the opportunity to try some new activities while nurturing your current routine.