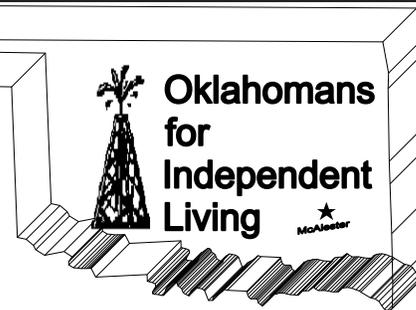


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# OIL Newsletter



**A monthly publication of THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING**

**601 East Carl Albert Parkway, McAlester, OK 74501, (918) 426-6220 or (800) 568-6821, Fax (918) 426-3245**  
(918) 426-6263 V/TDD, O.I.L. Web Page URL ([www.oilok.org](http://www.oilok.org)), [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))

If you are trying to go green and would like to help save trees, check out our newsletter at [www.oilok.org](http://www.oilok.org), call us and we will send it via e-mail. If you are receiving this newsletter in error or no longer wish to receive it, call and we will remove you from our mailing list.

## **INDEPENDENT LIVING**

Independent Living is controlling and directing your own life and taking responsibility for your own actions. It is knowing what choices are available and selecting what is right for you. Independent Living means being as self-sufficient as possible. It means taking risks and being allowed to succeed and fail on your own terms.

Independent Living means being able to exercise the greatest degree of choice about where you live, with whom you live, where your work, and how you use your time. It means participating in community life and pursuing activities of your own choosing.



## **FREE TAX ASSISTANCE**

The VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program provides free assistance to anyone under \$50,000 annually with basic income tax preparation. The program helps determine if you are eligible to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit and any other credits available. They prepare a simple tax form and then e-file it for you. The service is free to those who meet the income guidelines but you are to provide proof of your medical insurance.

The Ki-Bois Community Action agency is assisting individuals and will continue through April 15<sup>th</sup> with no appointment necessary. The Pittsburg County office, 609 East Peoria, in McAlester, provides free assistance Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with a lunch closure from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. You can reach Ki-Bois Community Action offices by calling;

Pittsburg County 918 423-3525  
Haskell County 918 967-3325  
LeFlore County 918 647-3267  
Latimer County 918 465-3381

At the time of the printing of this newsletter, the Southeastern Public Library in McAlester, was not yet providing tax assistance. However, please call them at 918 426-0930 to verify.



## **OPENINGS AT ROCK RIDGE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE APARTMENTS**

If you have a qualifying physical disability and meet the HUD financial requirements, Rock Ridge Apartments are an excellent choice. The complex is located at 808 East Jefferson in McAlester. The one and two bedroom apartments were built about two years ago, are totally accessible, and meet the needs of anyone who utilizes a wheelchair. The units feature for the wheelchair user, a roll under kitchen sink and counters, lowered stove and cabinets, and a roll in shower. Other features and amenities include;

Controlled access entry system  
On-site laundry facilities  
Outdoor patio  
Community room with full kitchen  
Off-street parking



If you live in a rural area and are looking to re-locate, now is the time.

To request a housing application, please call; toll-free 1-800-466-7722  
tty/tdd 1-800-627-3529  
Apply online at [www.accessiblespace.org](http://www.accessiblespace.org) or pick up an application at OIL.

## **FREE DENTAL CARE FOR OKLAHOMANS IN NEED**

The Oklahoma Mission of Mercy will be providing the service on February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in Oklahoma City, at the Cox Convention Center. Treatment begins at 5 a.m. each day. For more information, go to [www.okmom.org](http://www.okmom.org).

## **HOME HAZARDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS**

Home is where the heart is, but it's also where health dangers dwell. What you breathe and touch could actually be making you sick. For those with environmental disabilities, this is particularly helpful. To keep safe, learn the top 7 hazards and how to protect yourself...

### **1. Mold**

Does your bathroom, closet or basement have an old musty odor? Blame mold spores. They

make themselves at home in damp spots. Mold can grow within 24-48 hours where there's moisture and what they consider to be a food source. It doesn't take much to make mold happy and multiply: It chomps on dust, wood, paint, paper, cotton or oil, among other things. It's attracted to modern building materials like drywall. Mold can trigger asthma symptoms and allergic reactions. It often grows in a circular pattern and can be black, brown, white, yellow, pink or greenish-blue.

**Protective steps:** \*Use a dehumidifier to keep the humidity in mold-prone rooms below 50%. \*Operate an oscillating fan in the bathroom after showering and fix leaks as soon as possible. \*Keep rooms well ventilated. \*If you suspect mold, check the area with a flashlight (some of the fungi can only be seen with a bright light). Can't find the mold or its cause? Turn to the pros, The American Society of Home Inspectors.

### **2. Dust mites**

You can't see these microscopic critters with the naked eye but they can be one of the most common causes of allergies and asthma. Dust mites, too, need moisture and feed off the dead skin cells our bodies shed. Their favorite hiding place? Beds, pillows, mattresses, and sheets.

**Protective steps:** Face it: There's no way to get rid of dust mites, so you need to put a barrier between you and them. Here are some tips: \*Allergy covers can help because they're woven, so even dust mites can't slip through them. Seal your mattress, box spring, comforter, and pillows. (You can usually buy allergy covers where sheets are sold.) \*Wash your bedding and area rugs in

hot water (120 degrees F) at least once a week. \*Put items that aren't machine washable – like a pillow or stuffed animal – in the freezer for a couple hours at a time to kill dust mites. \*Don't go to bed with wet hair – you're just giving the mites more moisture. \*Regularly vacuum all floors, especially carpets, where dust mites hide.

### **3. Carpet chemicals**

When your carpet or area rug gives off that new carpet smell, it's usually shedding 4-PC, a chemical in carpet backing. Though the smell probably will go away within days or weeks, it can cause temporary headaches and hoarseness in people sensitive to chemicals.

#### **Protective steps:**

Ideally, new carpet should be aired before installation. But if that's not possible, keep the carpeted room well ventilated and stay out if you're sensitive to 4-PC. If the odor is strong despite ventilation for a week, you may want to have it removed as some carpets never stop giving off 4-PC. Here's how to tell if carpet odor is giving off gas:

1. Take a clean, fragrance-free paper towel and fold it in half twice.
2. Place it on the rug and cover it with aluminum foil secured with tape.
3. After 24 hours, fold the towel inside the foil quickly.
4. Then go outside and unwrap it just enough to take a whiff.
5. If it stinks, your carpet is giving off gas.

### **4. Medications**

Prescription and over-the-counter medications may look as tempting as candy to children, thanks to their interesting shapes and colors. **Protective steps:** \*Store these drugs where kids can't find them and use a safety lock on cupboard/cabinet. \*Make sure all bottles have child-resistant

caps. \*Never call any drugs candy (no matter how desperate you are for them to take it when they're sick) or they may dip into the "sweet stuff" on their own. \*Most importantly: Put the number of the Poison Control Center where it can easily be found.

### **5. Mothballs**

The stinky naphthalene balls that keep moths away also emit chemicals that can irritate people. Most of them are pesticides, which can be harmful to anyone's health.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), acute exposure through inhalation, ingestion and dermal contact is associated with anemia, damage to the liver, and, in infants, neurological damage.

**Protective steps:** Play it safe by replacing moth balls (and their horrible aroma) with natural moth repellants like cedar blocks or chips, dried lavender or even white peppercorns.

### **6. Cleaning products**

Like medications, the bright colors and sweet scents of cleaning products make them look appealing to little ones.

**Protective steps:** Store them high and if you have to store them in low cabinets, use baby-proof locks and make sure all tops are properly closed.

### **7. Carbon monoxide**

This odorless, colorless gas is toxic and may even kill you. And you may not even realize it's in your home! Typically, the danger comes from fuel-burning appliances: furnaces, stoves, fireplaces, clothes dryers, water heaters and space heaters, as well as automobile exhaust from attached garages. Levels of this toxic gas may cause headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, impaired vision, and loss of coordination,

unconsciousness and, at very high concentrations, death.

**Protective steps:** Buy a carbon monoxide detector and test it regularly. \*Make sure fuel-burning appliances are installed correctly. To stay safe, have a pro inspect all your fuel-burning appliances annually.

\*With gas stoves, use an exhaust fan vented to the outside. \*Make sure the flue is open when using your fireplace and that your space heater is vented. \*Never let your car idle in a garage.

### **BOWLING RESULTS**



#### **Special Olympics**

Recently, ten Freespirit athletes competed in Oklahoma City for the 2016 Oklahoma Special Olympics Winter Games. The team made the long trip to the competition in January where three of the ten qualified to bowl at the Summer Games this year. Congratulations!

### **VALENTINE'S DANCE!**

The dance will be on Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> from 7-10:00 p.m. It will be held at the Stipe Center, 801 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in McAlester. Bring your sweetheart or maybe come and meet one! You are asked to bring a 2 liter of soda or a package of chips or store bought cookies. A live DJ will be there and we will have a dance contest with prizes for the winners! Call OIL for free local transportation.



### **CRAFT CLASS**

We will be making a craft on Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Please call by the 16<sup>th</sup> to register so participant preparations can be made.



### **SATURDAY TRANSPORTATION**

OIL will provide transportation in the McAlester area whether it is to visit friends/family or just to see an afternoon movie matinee. The February date is set for the 20<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:00 a.m.

### **EQUIPMENT NEEDED**

If you have a wheelchair, bath bench, walker with a seat, or cane that you are no longer utilizing, please call OIL. These items are among the most needed by individuals with mobility concerns and your donation would certainly be appreciated.

A donation letter can be given for tax purposes.



### **OIL CLOSED**

OIL will be closed on Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup> for observance of President's Day.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

O.I.L. provides lift-equipped transportation in McAlester and the surrounding area.

**Monday thru Thursday, 8:00 – 4:30  
Friday 8:00 – Noon**

A twenty-four hour minimum notice is required. The cost is \$2 per pick up in McAlester and \$3 for Krebs and Frink Chambers. Outside this area, fees are based on actual costs of gasoline needed to provide the service.

*\*Prices are subject to change.*

Oklahomans for Independent Living  
 601 E. Carl Albert Pkwy.  
 McAlester, OK 74501  
 918-426-6220 Main  
 800-568-6821 Toll Free  
 918-426-3245 Fax  
 918-426-6220 V/TTY  
[www.oilok.org](http://www.oilok.org)



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Return Service Requested

**All donations to OIL are tax deductible.**

The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

<i>*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted</i>						
<b>EVENTS</b>						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>February</b>	<b>1</b> <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm	<b>2</b> <u>OIL Social</u> El Charro's 5:30 pm	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <u>Men's Gp.</u> Carry Out Bbq 4 pm	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <u>Valentine's Dance</u> Stipe Center 7:00-10:00 pm
<b>14</b> 	<b>15</b> OIL CLOSED	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <u>Women's Gp.</u> Goodwill 11 am	<b>18</b> <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <u>Saturday Transportation</u> 8 am
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <u>Craft Class</u> 1 pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>					

**\*Low Impact Exercise Class for Sr.'s** meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center  
**\*Alzheimer's Support Group**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed., 12:30 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ  
**\*Diabetes Support Group**, 1<sup>st</sup> Tue., 6:00 p.m., McAlester Regional Health Center Wellness Conf. Room, call Kathy at 421-6812  
**\*For information on Men's & Women's Grief Support Groups** – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 . For information on a 7 week **Dealing with Grief Course** call Heartland Hospice, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues., 6:00 p.m., Pittsburg County Health Dept., 423-1267

