



FUN FACTS: Celebrating Older Americans Month

Each May, we take time to honor and appreciate the older adults who enrich our families, workplaces, and communities. Older Americans Month (OAM) has been a national celebration for more than half a century, honoring the contributions, resilience, and stories of older adults across the United States. Here are seven fun and fascinating facts about this important observance:

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1. It began in 1963.

President John F. Kennedy first designated May as “Senior Citizens Month” to acknowledge the contributions of older adults and bring national attention to the issues they faced.

2. It was inspired by just 17 million Americans.

In 1963, about 17 million people in the United States were age 65 or older. Today, that number has grown to more than 60 million. Then and now, recognizing their contributions—and advocating for their well-being—has remained important enough to inspire a national observance.

3. President Lyndon B. Johnson helped rename it.

After signing the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965, President Johnson officially renamed the celebration “Older Americans Month” (OAM) and helped expand programs and services that support older adults nationwide, solidifying the observance as an annual tradition.

4. It launched the foundation for many key aging services.

The Older Americans Act (OAA)—closely connected to the origin of Older Americans Month (OAM)—helped establish services like home-delivered meals, senior centers, caregiver support programs, and community engagement initiatives that are still widely used today.

5. Every year has a unique national theme.

Themes vary each May—focusing on topics like aging in place, staying active, inclusion, connection, and contributions to society. The themes help communities plan events that highlight older adults in meaningful ways.

6. It celebrates strength and longevity.

When OAM began, life expectancy was about 70 years. Today, older adults are the fastest-

growing age group in the country, and many remain active in work, volunteering, caregiving, and advocacy well into their 70s, 80s, and beyond.

7. Communities nationwide join the celebration.

From state agencies to local senior centers, libraries, and workplaces, thousands of organizations use May as a chance to honor older adults through events, resource fairs, storytelling projects, and wellness activities.

Older Americans Month is more than a celebration—it's a reminder of the experience, strength, and wisdom that surrounds us. In celebrating Older Americans Month, we reaffirm our commitment to valuing the wisdom, contributions, and well-being of older adults in every community.