aster SCENE

December 2026 | A Monthly Newsletter About Our Services | Volume 20, Issue 12









Aster wishes you a holiday season filled with peace, joy, connection, and meaningful moments. May this season bring warmth and happiness to you and your loved ones.

Your support today can transform someone's life for the better.

Read more on page 2.

IN THIS ISSUE

Lunch Menu	1
Meeting the Moment	2
Share the Love	3
December Activities	5
Center Movies	8
Health Corner	9
Puzzle	10

DECEMBER MENU

For next day reservations (lunch is served at 11:30 am), call 480-962-5612 (Mesa Downtown) or 480-218-2221 (Red Mt).
The Suggested Contribution for participants age 60+ is $4.00.
Items with ** contain pork or pork products. Menu items subject to change due to availability.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Items with **contain pork or pork products. Menu subject to change due to availability.	**1** Pot roast with potatoes, carrots, celery, and gravy, a side of broccoli, a whole wheat dinner roll, and a banana.	**2** Chicken tacos on whole wheat tortilla with roasted corn, refried beans, and Mandarin oranges.	**3** Spaghetti and meatballs with Italian green beans, a side salad, a whole wheat bread-stick, and an apple crisp with oatmeal.	**4** Pork** loin with gravy, potato wedges, coleslaw, a whole wheat biscuit, and mixed berries.
7 Clam chowder with potatoes and corn, Brussels sprouts, roasted broccoli, a whole wheat dinner roll, and apricot slices.	**8** Veggie lasagna with cubed roasted potatoes, spinach, a whole wheat biscuit, and an apple.	**9** Roast turkey with gravy, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, a whole wheat dinner roll, mixed fruit salad, and fig newtons.	**10** Chili con carne, sauteed yellow squash, green side salad, cornbread, and mixed berries.	**11** Swedish pork** meatballs on a bed of egg noodles and butter with green beans, a whole wheat dinner roll, and peaches.
14 Salisbury steak with gravy, cubed roasted potatoes, spinach, a whole wheat biscuit, and an apple.	**15** Chicken parmesan with roasted red potatoes, green peas, a while wheat dinner roll, and diced peaches.	**16** Cheese ravioli with marinara sauce, a side of Italian blend vegetables, a whole wheat breadstick, and diced mango.	**17** Cheeseburger on a whole wheat bun, tater tots, baked beans, and fruit cocktail.	**18** Tri-tip roast beef with gravy, baked potato, cauliflower, whole wheat roll, apple crisp, and cake **JOIN US FOR THE HOLIDAY LUNCHEON**
21 Philly cheese steak with peppers & onions on a whole wheat roll, with sides of tater tots and succotash, and diced peaches.	**22** Chicken pot pie with a biscuit, steamed carrots, 5-way vegetables, a whole pear and graham crackers.	**23** Bacon, lettuce, tomato, and ham wrap in a whole wheat tortilla, Cole slaw, and mixed berries.	**24** Shrimp alfredo over whole wheat linguini, with cauliflower, zucchini, and fruit cocktail.	**25** **CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY**
28 Roasted chicken with gravy on whole wheat pasta, with yellow squash, California blend vegetables, and pineapple.	**29** Pork ** meatball sub with cheese on a whole wheat roll, with carrot & raison salad, green beans, and peaches.	**30** Breaded shrimp with cocktail sauce with brown rice pilaf, chuckwagon corn, Brussel sprouts, and pears.	**31** Corned beef with cabbage, red potatoes, rye bread, mixed berries, and cake **RED MOUNTAIN SENIOR CENTER CLOSED**	**1** **CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY**

Aster Aging, Inc is funded in part by Area Agency on Aging, Region One

ASTER AGING

45 West University Drive • Mesa, AZ 85201 • 480-964-9014

MEETING THE MOMENT



Today presents an unprecedented opportunity for action on behalf of older adults.

Older adults in the East Valley face a new set of challenges in a changing world. Over the past year, more participated in Aster's programs and services than ever before. At a moment of unprecedented need is a chance for us to come together and do an incredible amount of good.

No two older adults in our community have the same needs. Some may seek a place to enjoy a hot meal and laughter with friends. Some may wish to review benefits, services, and resources with a trusted expert through a free and private consultation. Some may need a ride to an essential appointment, or simply a friendly face who will stop by for visits regularly. Through our many programs, Aster is proud to serve as a connection point, a safety net, and a trusted ally for thousands of older adults.

Just as life does not look one way as we get older, success has many different faces. Participants in our Senior Centers may find new lifelong friends, while a participant in our Meals on Wheels program may be able to comfortably remain in their home thanks to the service. Whatever circumstances find local seniors, it is our hope that Aster's programs meet their unique needs and help them get to a better place.

These transformative programs cannot run in isolation. This truly would not be possible without the steadfast support of our community.

The need today is growing. So too is our opportunity. You can join us in this work by making a donation at a level that is meaningful to you. We have a chance, together, to not only meet the need for older adults, but to go above and beyond to ensure that no one in our community goes through this journey alone.

To our participants, staff, volunteers, and supporters from all walks of life, I thank you for being invaluable partners in this work.

Deborah B. Schaus, MSW
Chief Executive Officer

PROGRAMS FOR YOU

We support and empower East Valley older adults and their families to remain independent and engaged in our communities through:

CENTER-BASED SERVICES

Our Centers are social hubs, with lunchtime meals, education programs, and social activities.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Providing nutritious meals and essential wellness checks, with both short and long-term plans, to meet your unique needs.

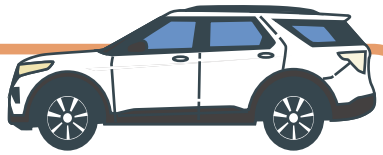
IN-HOME SUPPORT

Supporting isolated adults with transportation, grocery shopping, well visits, respite, personal care, and housekeeping.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Helping navigate and access services and health resources, as well as being the NCOA Benefits Enrollment Center for the East Valley.

SUBARU SEASON FOR SHARING



For the 19th year running, the Meals on Wheels America network is participating in the Subaru Share the Love Event. Through this partnership, Subaru and its retailers have helped Meals on Wheels providers like Aster deliver more than 4.6 million meals nationwide and friendly visits to seniors in need.

One in four seniors lives alone, and one in seven might not know from where their next meal is coming. These numbers are even higher in our community. Aster's Meals on Wheels program provides the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks to local seniors who depend on these vital services to remain healthy and independent at home.

From November 19, 2026 through January 4, 2027, for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased, the company will donate $300 to the customer's choice of participating charities. One available option is Meals on Wheels. Since the Subaru Share the Love Event began in 2008, Subaru and its retailers have donated nearly 5 million meals and friendly visits to seniors served by local Meals on Wheels programs across the country.

Aster's Meals on Wheels program will receive a portion of these national proceeds, helping us continue to reach seniors throughout our community who need us most.

If you're considering a new car this season, think Subaru. Your purchase helps sustain Meals on Wheels for those who need it in our community. To learn more about the Subaru Share the Love Event and how your purchase supports Meals on Wheels, visit the official campaign website at **www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethelove**.



JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL

HOLIDAY LUNCH

Dec 18 | 11:30 - 1:00 pm

RSVP TODAY
Mesa Downtown at 480-962-5612
Red Mountain at 480-218-2221

Enjoy a delicious holiday meal as we celebrate the joys of the season. Fun and festive activities will help make the season bright.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

THE GROVES SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

We offer charming cottage-style apartments for adults 55+ looking for low-maintenance, community living. Our ground-level homes give you freedom to pursue your passions, while surrounded by convenient amenities, social connections and a supportive atmosphere!

Starting at **$2,265 per month**

- One or Two Bedrooms Available
- Furnished One Bedrooms Available
- Large Open or Screened Patios
- Housekeeping + Trash
- Most Utilities Included
- In-House Transportation
- Community Clubhouse + Social Events
- Fitness Center + Outpatient Therapy
- Heated Pool, Hot Tub + More!



CALL US TODAY! (480) 993-5636 | 5848 E UNIVERSITY DR. MESA. 85205

45 West University Drive • Mesa, AZ 85201 • 480-964-9014

ASTER ACTIVITIES

STAY IN TOUCH WITH ASTER TO READ MORE NEWS
Website: AsterAZ.org | Social Media: @AsterArizona
Email **Development@asteraz.org** for a chance to have your photo featured in the newsletter!



Pictured above: Enjoying a game of cards and friendly conversation at the Red Mountain Senior Center.



Pictured above: All smiles while making collage boxes in Artistic Whimsy at the Red Mountain Senior Center.



Pictured above: Enjoying coffee, donuts, and friendly conversation at the Mesa Downtown Senior Center's Veteran Social.



Pictured above: Participants enjoy Morning Movement, an adaptive exercise class at the Mesa Downtown Senior Center.

The Aster Scene is made possible in part by the support of our advertisers, which helps us keep this publication free of charge. The presence of paid advertisements does not constitute an endorsement by Aster Aging. For more information, contact development@asteraz.org.

ASTER SENIOR CENTERS

Activities with an * have fees and require pre-registration.

MESA DOWNTOWN EVENTS

To RSVP for an activity, call the Senior Center at 480-962-5612, email cbs@asteraz.org, or sign up in-person.

December 1 & 15 | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY @ ASTER

The Mesa Public Library's Bookmobile will be onsite every other Tuesday in December - stop by to check out a book and learn what the library has to offer you.

December 15 | 10:00 - 11:00 am

BUDGETING & SAVING

Presented by Chase Bank

Learn the basics of budgeting and saving from the experts at Chase Bank.

December 2 | 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

HEARING SCREENING

Presented by A.T. Still University

Come get your hearing checked in this FREE screening with the experts from A.T. Still University.

Fridays | 10:00 - 11:00 am

SCIENCE WORKSHOP

Join us every Friday for a fun and informative workshop on how our world works! You will receive an informative handout, watch videos, and discuss various topics.





Tuesdays, Wednesdays | 8:15 - 9:15 am | Mesa Downtown

MORNING MOVEMENT*

Get your day moving with indoor exercise! **$2/person.**

Mondays | 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Mesa Downtown
Thursdays | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Red Mountain

LINE DANCING*

Join us for live music and lots of fun every week!
Red Mountain: $5/person | Mesa Downtown: FREE

Tuesdays | 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Mesa Downtown

WORLD HISTORY CLASS

Learn about remarkable events through history.

Monday, Thursday | 8:30 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown

ADVANCED & BEGINNERS TAI CHI CLASSES*

Beginner (10:00 am) Advanced (8:30 am). **Cost varies.**

Mondays | 12:30 - 1:30 pm | Mesa Downtown
1st Wednesday | 10:30 - 11:30 am | Red Mountain

KARAOKE

Have fun singing golden-oldies in this judgement-free zone

Mondays | 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Mesa Downtown

SENIOR PLAYERS

No experience needed for this fun-loving theater group!

Monday, Thursday | 12:30 - 3:00 pm | Red Mountain
Mondays | 9:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown

DIAMOND ART*

Create amazing and dazzling art pieces. Bring your own project to work on. **Cost: Supplies**

Wednesdays | 9:00 - 10:00 am | Mesa Downtown

HALL OF FAME

Learn about all things baseball with volunteer Art.

Tuesdays | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm | Red Mountain
Tuesdays | 9:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown

STITCH & CHAT

Enjoy good company while crafting creative pieces.

Tuesday & Friday | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Mesa Downtown

GERI FIT **Facilitated by Area Agency on Aging**

Enjoy a great workout using bands, weights, and more!

Thursdays | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown

CHAIR YOGA*

Calm your mind with chair yoga. **$3/person**

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Visit our online calendar at asteraz.org for more details.

Thursdays | 9:30 - 10:30 am | Mesa Downtown
Wednesdays | 9:00 - 10:00 am | Red Mountain
BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS
Learn your numbers to better manage your health!

Wednesdays | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Mesa Downtown
Fridays | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Red Mountain
GRIEF & LOSS SUPPORT Facilitated by EMPACT
A bereavement support group for seniors.

Thursdays | 8:00 am - 1:30 pm | Mesa Downtown
Fridays | 8:30 - 11:00 am | Red Mountain
ART STUDIO*
Enjoy Open Art Studio Thursdays and Portrait Painting with a live model on Fridays. **Bring your own supplies.**

Fridays | 9:30 - 10:30 am | Mesa Downtown
WRITER'S GUILD
Come to share, learn and spark your creative juices.

1st & 3rd Monday | 8:30 am | Mesa Downtown
2nd Friday | 9:00 - 10:00 am | Red Mountain
VETERANS' SOCIAL
Enjoy coffee & donuts each month with fellow veterans.

December 23 | 11:30 - 12:00 pm | Both Centers
DECEMBER BIRTHDAY PARTY
Come celebrate the birthdays of those born this month with cake.

Wednesdays | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Mesa Downtown
1st Friday | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Red Mountain
BOOK CLUB Facilitated by New Frontiers of MCC
Join us & discuss a shared love of reading.

Tuesdays | 9:30 - 10:30 am | Mesa Downtown
ART IN ACTION
Discuss art history from all eras and parts of the world.

Thursdays | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm | Mesa Downtown
VETERAN'S ART
Presented by the Mesa Art League
Join us every Thursday to make art with felllow Veterans.

Fridays | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Red Mountain
MOVIN' FORWARD Facilitated by EMPACT
A group for those who have already gone through a loss and wish to make new friends.

Wednesdays | 1:00 - 3:00 pm | Red Mountain
WEDNESDAY DANCE
Cut a rug every Wednesday at the Senior Center

RED MOUNTAIN EVENTS

To RSVP for an activity, call the Senior Center at 480-218-2221, email cbs@asteraz.org, or sign up in-person.

December 1 | 8:00 am - 3:00 pm
HEARING SCREENING
Presented by A.T. Still University
Come get your hearing checked in this FREE screening with the experts from A.T. Still University.

Women's Social - December 3
Men's Social - December 17
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOCIALS
Meet a group of likeminded friends in a low-pressure social hour designed just for you. From 10:00 to 11:00 am.

December 7 | 1:00 - 3:30 pm
PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP
Presented by The Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center
For those living with Parkinson's Disease and their loved ones.

December 8 | 10:00 - 11:00 am
BUDGETING & SAVING
Presented by Chase Bank
Learn the basics of budgeting and saving from the experts at Chase Bank.





ASTER AGING

45 West University Drive • Mesa, AZ 85201 • 480-964-9014

EXCURSIONS

Must be a registered participant and RSVP in advance to join.

Mesa Downtown

PLANETARIUM @ MCC

December 22 | 1:00 - 3:30 pm

Explore the wonders of our universe at Mesa's planetarium. See phases of the moon, the rotation of the sky, and more.

Cost: FREE

Bus Pickup: 12:30 pm
Space Limited, 10 seats per trip
RSVP: In-Person at the Mesa Downtown Senior Center

Red Mountain

DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN

December 8 | 9:15 - 11:30 am

Join us for a walk through the beautiful gardens embellished with art and seasonal décor.

Cost: $5

Bus Pickup: 8:45 am
Space Limited, 12 seats per trip
RSVP: In-Person at the Red Mountain Senior Center

RED MOUNTAIN KARAOKE

Karaoke is back at the Red Mountain Senior Center! Sing your favorite songs in a judgement-free zone.

December 2, 2026 | 10:00 - 11:30 am
RSVP: cbs@asteraz.org | 480-218-2221 or in-person at the senior center

CENTER GAMES

Drop by or email **CBS@asteraz.org** to save your spot.

MESA DOWNTOWN

FUN & GAMES
Tues & Thurs | 9:30 - 10:30 am

PINOCHLE
Tues & Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm

BINGO!
FOR FUN: Weds | 12:30 - 3:00 pm
MONEY: Fri | 1:00 - 3:30 pm

RED MOUNTAIN

MAHJONG
Mon | 12:30 - 3:00 pm
Beginner's: Mon | 9:30 - 12:00 pm

PINOCHLE
Tues & Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm
Beginner's: Mon | 1:00 - 3:00 pm

GAMES AND FRIENDS
Tues, Weds, & Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm

CANASTA
Weds & Fri | 12:00 - 3:00 pm

MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES
Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm

CHESS
Thurs | 12:30 - 3:00 pm

BINGO! FOR FUN
Tues & Fri | 12:30 - 2:00 pm

BRIDGE
Mon, Weds, & Fri | 12:30 - 3:00 pm

ASTER AGING

45 West University Drive • Mesa, AZ 85201 • 480-964-9014



NOW SHOWING

Aster's Senior Centers each host FREE weekly movies starting at 12:30 pm.
Popcorn is provided at all showings!
Downtown Senior Center movies are on Thursday, and Red Mountain Senior Center movies are on Monday. RSVP online, by phone/email or in person to secure your seat!

MESA DOWNTOWN (Thursdays)

December 3 | Michael | (2026) | PG-13
Traces Michael Jackson's journey from his Jackson 5 beginnings to solo superstardom during the Thriller era.

December 10 | Jurassic Park | (1993) | PG-13
Visitors fight for survival when security fails at an island theme park filled with cloned dinosaurs.

December 17 | A Christmas Story | (1983) | PG
Young Ralphie Parker schemes to convince his parents, teacher, and Santa that a Red Ryder BB gun is the ultimate Christmas gift.

December 24 | National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation | (1989) | PG-13
Clark Griswold's ideal family holiday devolves into hilarious chaos and disaster.

RED MOUNTAIN (Mondays)

December 14 | Miracle on 34th Street | (1994) | PG
An elderly department store Santa claims to be the real Kris Kringle, leading to a heartwarming courtroom trial.

December 21 | Christmas with the Kranks | (2004) | PG
A couple tries to skip Christmas and go on a cruise, but chaos ensues when their daughter decides to come home at the last minute.

December 28 | A Christmas Story | (1983) | PG
Young Ralphie Parker schemes to convince his parents, teacher, and Santa that a Red Ryder BB gun is the ultimate Christmas gift.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



INDEPENDENT LIVING. *Extra Support.*

ONE BEDROOM STARTS AT $2,240 PER MONTH*
*Rates are subject to change.

- Chef prepared meals
- Weekly Housekeeping
- Full Calendar of Activities
- Fitness Classes & Gym
- All Utilities (except phone)
- Cable TV
- Transportation
- Emergency Call System

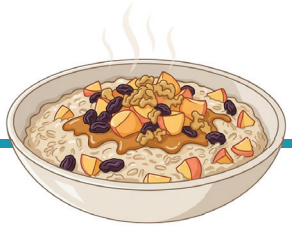
SCHEDULE A TOUR AND WE WILL SEND YOU HOME WITH A FREE GIFT!

480.924.6474
discoverypoint@gres.com
discoverypointretirement.com

RENT INCLUDES ALL THIS AND MUCH MORE!
55+ COMMUNITY

DISCOVERY POINT
6210 E Arbor Ave
Mesa, AZ 85206

GUARDIAN



ASTER AGING

45 West University Drive • Mesa, AZ 85201 • 480-964-9014

SAVORY SWEET POTATO BEAN MASH

This one-pot mash uses soft, budget-friendly canned goods, and the gentle, creamy consistency makes it ideal for people with sensitive teeth or a low appetite.

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz) sweet potatoes, drained
- 1 can (15 oz) low-sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup milk or fortified soy milk
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder or cumin
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese (optional)
- 1 pinch salt and pepper

Directions

1. Prep: Wash hands. Open and drain the sweet potatoes and black beans.
2. Mash: In a saucepan over medium heat, warm the sweet potatoes, beans, milk, and spices. Mash gently with a fork for 5 minutes.
3. Melt: Stir in cheese until creamy, then remove from heat.
4. Serve: Eat warm, or refrigerate up to 3 days. Reheat a portion in the microwave with a splash of milk.

NUTRITION AND SLEEP

Sources: CDC Sleep Hygiene Guidelines, NIH MedlinePlus Healthy Sleep, USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

What we eat and when we eat can make a huge difference in how well we sleep. Heavy meals, late-night coffee, or alcohol can disrupt your body's natural rest. Public health experts recommend a few simple eating habits to help you wake up feeling rested.

- **Time Your Dinner:** Try to finish large, heavy, or spicy meals at least two to three hours before bed. Eating right before sleep forces your stomach to work overtime, which can cause heartburn, indigestion, and restless sleep.
- **Pick Sleep-Friendly Foods:** Focus on fresh, simple foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean meats. High-fiber foods help keep your sleep steady throughout the night.
- **Eat Foods That Help You Relax:** Certain foods naturally help your body unwind.
- Tryptophan: Found in turkey, eggs, chicken, and dairy, this helps your brain produce sleep hormones.
- **Magnesium and Calcium:** Found in spinach, almonds, seeds, and bananas, these calm your muscles and nervous system.
- **Complex Carbs:** Whole-wheat bread or oatmeal paired with a little protein can help these relaxation nutrients reach your brain faster.
- **Cut Back on Coffee and Alcohol:** Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening. While a glass of wine or liquor might make you feel sleepy at first, it actually breaks up your sleep later in the night, leading to frequent waking.
- **Sip Water Early:** Stay hydrated during the day, but cut back on fluids right before bed so you do not have to make repeated trips to the bathroom overnight.
- **Set a Peaceful Evening Routine:** Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet, and turn off televisions and screens an hour before bed to let your brain know it is time to sleep.

Visit cdc.gov/sleep for more health tips and tricks.

PUZZLE

GIANT CATEGORIES

Fill in the boxes with words or terms that begin with each of the letters in GIANT. Add your own category in the last row.

	G	I	A	N	T
Things That Are Big					
Movies					
Colors					
Things Found in a Kitchen					
Historical People					
Your Choice					

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



45 W University Dr, Suite A
Mesa, AZ 85201-5831

480-964-9014

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT #314

To unsubscribe, email **development@asteraz.org.**

CONTACT

Administrative Offices
45 W University Dr, Ste A,
480-964-9014 p

Mesa Downtown Senior Center
247 N Macdonald St,
480-962-5612 p

Red Mountain Senior Center
7550 E Adobe St,
480-218-2221 p

ASTER'S MISSION

Our mission is to empower and support East Valley older adults to remain independent and engaged in our communities.

ASTER'S VISION

Our vision is for Aster Aging to be a leader in providing direct services and mobilizing resources that support the changing needs of our older adult population.

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW

Read the newsletter early every month by receiving it in your email inbox or reading it right on our website!

Email **development@asteraz.org** to learn more.

DONATE ONLINE TODAY

Your gift empowers and supports local seniors!
www.asteraz.org/help/donate.html