

LivingWell

Summer 2021 • Volume 17 • Issue 3

A publication of



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Albert Maxey Sr. came to Lincoln in 1957 with a college basketball scholarship and made a career with the Lincoln Police Department, influencing Lincoln's future and his own.

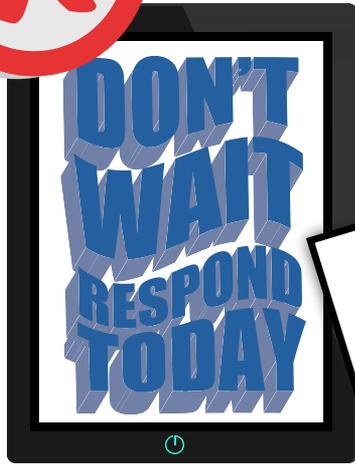




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Director's Corner



Senior Centers, Fitness Center Now Open!

In early June, we were thrilled to finally be able to open our senior centers and fitness center to our wonderful Aging Partners patrons and friends. It's been a long, trying year for all of us, but seeing everyone again has been beyond uplifting – it's been an eye-opening awakening to the fact that things are getting back to normal following this pandemic battle we've all been fighting.

If you haven't had the chance to dine with us in one of our senior centers, I hope you'll take the opportunity to let our staff serve you a nutritious and delicious meal! A simple phone call to the senior center

where you want to eat two days in advance of the day you want to eat is all it takes (you'll find a listing of our senior centers on page 35 of this issue).

If you've never visited our fitness center at 9th and "J" streets in Lincoln, I hope you'll find the time to do that soon. We have a good selection of age-friendly exercise and cardio equipment available for your use. If you need help getting started, we have a personal trainer and other staff ready to assist!

The socialization aspect of our facilities is not to be overlooked. Senior centers and our fitness center

are great places to reconnect with old friends and maybe meet some new ones. You can call 402-441-7575 for more information.

I owe a tremendous debt of thanks to my staff who make things happen at our facilities. But right now, it's all about you – our patrons. We've missed you, and it makes my year to be able to say WELCOME BACK! 

Randall S. Jones

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Living Well (ISSN 1556-9780, USPS 657-630) is published quarterly (January, April, July and October) by Aging Partners and created by News Link, 122 S. 29th St., Lincoln, NE 68510. Last issue: *Living Well* Spring 2021.

Periodical postal rates paid at Lincoln, NE and additional mailing offices. Issues printed: 17,002.

POSTMASTER-Aging Partners address changes to:

Living Well Magazine
1005 "O" St.
Lincoln, NE 68508-3628
Email: livingwell@lincoln.ne.gov
Fax: 402-441-7160
Phone: 402-441-6146
(collect calls accepted)
Toll free: 800-247-0938 (Nebraska only)

Publisher, editor and advertising: David Norris, 402-441-6156
Mailing list and accounts: Deb Elrod, 402-441-6146

Production Coordinators: News Link, 402-475-6397

Living Well is a service of Aging Partners. A voluntary suggested annual subscription of \$12 or any amount is welcome. This magazine is for the 85,700 citizens, 60 years of age and over, who reside in the counties of Butler, Fillmore, Lancaster, Polk, Saline, Saunders, Seward and York in the state of Nebraska, United States of America. However, all readers of all ages are welcome!

This publication's purpose is to educate and inform persons on topics, programs, issues and activities that are of concern to the mature population, their families and community organizations. Specific emphasis is on articles pertaining to the services of Aging Partners. Contents may be reproduced with credit to the magazine.

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Staying Involved

Basketball Brings Maxey; He Stays to Inspire

Albert Maxey Sr. expresses his appreciation for the opportunity to come live in Lincoln.

“If it wasn’t for that, I wouldn’t be who I am today,” he said.

But Lincoln, too, should be grateful for the ways Maxey helped to assist the city throughout the years.

An Indiana native, Maxey graduated from Indianapolis’ all-Black Crispus Attucks High School in 1957. He played on the school’s basketball team, becoming the first

all-Black high school in the nation to win a state championship in 1955. He was a junior starter on the 1955-56 team that finished the season with a second consecutive state title, and played his senior year returning to the state championship game in 1957. Maxey earned All-Star honors and was known as one of the top basketball players in Indiana and the country in 1957. Many of his teammates went on to play for Division I schools.

Historians have noted that

because the school’s Black student-athletes played and won against predominately white teams, the successful basketball program helped the Black community as the players served as role models for other Black youth.

“Our winning changed the whole concept of Black athletes and what they have accomplished in Indianapolis,” he said. “If it wasn’t for my team winning the state championship in basketball, it wouldn’t have led me to Lincoln.”

Finding Home in Lincoln

After graduation in 1957, Maxey came to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a scholarship to play basketball for the Cornhuskers. Having numerous collegiate offers, Maxey considers himself lucky to be chosen by Jerry Bush, former Huskers basketball head coach and grandfather of current Huskers basketball head coach, Fred Hoiberg.

When it came to choosing a school, Maxey selected Nebraska because his high school coach, Ray Crowe, had gone to college with Nebraska’s assistant coach, Tony Sharpe.

“Lincoln was the place for me,” he said.

During his playing days at Nebraska, Maxey was named All-Big 8 Conference twice. His leadership on the court took him on to bigger things. Maxey was not eligible to play basketball his senior year,

“Lincoln was the place for me.”

– Albert Maxey Sr.



so on a whim he applied for and joined the Lincoln Police Department in 1961. He walked the beat before officers carried radios, became a patrol officer and was promoted to detective sergeant and worked the criminal division.

In 1965, Maxey returned to UNL to complete school. He graduated in 1973 with a degree in art and education. Later that year, LPD Police Chief Joseph Carroll advocated for Maxey because of his leadership skills and sent him to the FBI National Academy, a 10-week program providing coursework in intelligence theory, terrorism, law enforcement community, forensic science and more to help improve the administration of justice in police departments and agencies and raise law enforcement standards, knowledge and cooperation worldwide. He returned to Lincoln as a lieutenant, today known as captains.

Maxey enjoyed training other LPD officers and was assigned to spend the day with Martin Luther King Jr. when he visited Lincoln to speak at Pershing Auditorium in 1964.

“That was the highlight of my career,” he said. “As Martin Luther King Jr.’s reputation got bigger and bigger, and after his assassination, I realized what he meant to the country and appreciated that I had the opportunity to meet and be with him.”

Throughout Maxey’s career with LPD, he served in various areas, including homicides, drugs, serious crimes and occasionally an out-of-city undercover stint. He also drew suspect composites.

Upon retirement from LPD in 1994, Maxey worked with Lincoln Public Schools, creating roles for and hiring school resource officers in four of the city’s high schools. He handled that role for five years before continuing to work security in the Expelled Student Program, which allowed suspended students to do their school work at another location and keep up with their peers before returning to class after their suspension was completed.

In 2004, Maxey retired again, and focused on his art — opening an art studio in the Burkholder Building in Lincoln’s Haymarket.

Maxey says he always has had an appreciation for art and enjoys working with acrylic and oil paints, pencil and ink, creating works of surrealism and a mix of realism and abstract art. He often paints portraits, animals, flowers and structures — he even created some COVID-19 6-foot walking sticks for a friend. He sells his art occasionally, and his work can often be seen at shows throughout the city.



Following an impressive high school and college basketball career, Albert Maxey Sr. went on to work for the Lincoln Police Department and Lincoln Public Schools and found countless ways to help the community.

Making a Name

When he first arrived in Lincoln, Maxey said he felt a little out of place in a predominately white city, comparing it to being a fly in a bowl of milk. With room to grow, Lincoln’s diversity is better now. Maxey notes seeing more Black people in professional jobs — one was his wife, JoAnn, and his daughter, Charlene.

Maxey and JoAnn met in Indianapolis and married in 1959. JoAnn was known for her advocacy of the young and disadvantaged. She was the first Black person elected to the Lincoln Board of Education and the first Black female to serve as a state senator. She spent her final years managing the Malone Center’s senior program before she died of cancer in 1992. A Lincoln elementary school bears her name, as well as the Malone Center’s senior program.

“I am proud of my history with her,” Maxey said. “I got the opportunity to bring her here, and I am proud of what she accomplished here because of that.”

Continued on page 6.

Basketball Brings Maxey; He Stays to Inspire

Continued from page 5.

Together, they encouraged their four children to graduate from college.

“We taught our kids to be educated enough to take any task, so they could do anything they wanted,” he said. They saw that in their father with his advancement in law enforcement, and their mother in her politics and advocacy.

The couple also encouraged faith for their children.

“I wanted them to know they’re destined to do what they were brought here to do and to take advantage of that,” Maxey said.

More Honors for Maxey

Maxey was inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in

1992 and the Nebraska Basketball Hall of Fame in 1995. He also was awarded Outstanding Police Officer; and in 2011, he received the Bus Whitehead Distinguished Alumni Award for being a positive force in the local and state community since his playing days ended. He served as the director of basketball for the Cornhusker State Games and coached the LPD midget league basketball team.

Maxey appreciates the successes he’s had and credits God. He has been thankful for the support and sense of community he received at the Malone Center and Christ Temple Mission Church.

“These were places for me to feel more relaxed and feel my

roots,” he said. “That meant a lot to me, and I am still a part of these places to keep serving the Lord.”

Today, Maxey also enjoys spending time with his family, running marathons, cross-country biking and golfing. He has a special spot in his heart for basketball, but said he stopped playing years ago. 

 **We taught our kids to be educated enough to take any task, so they could do anything they wanted.”**

– Albert Maxey Sr.



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Foster Grandparents Stay Connected, Involved

After having taught art and reading to teens and young adults for 30 years, Greg Brown retired and shifted those skills to volunteer with 3- to 5-year-olds through the Foster Grandparent Program, a collaboration between AmeriCorps Seniors and the Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties.

The program places adults who are 55 and over in Lincoln's Community Action Head Start classrooms, where they focus on supporting children's school readiness.

"I think it's so important as we age to keep engaged, embrace new challenges and keep the mind active," Brown said.

During the pandemic, Brown said he wouldn't have known what to do if he couldn't volunteer.

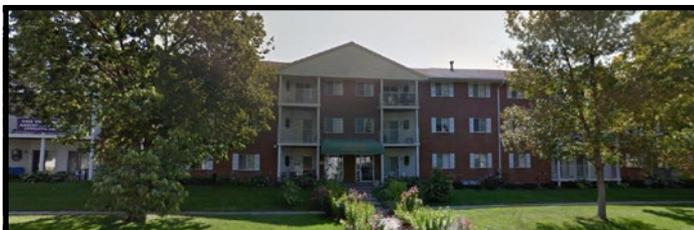
When COVID-19 protocols were put into place in March 2020, the program had to re-evaluate how to best serve the children while keeping volunteers safe. By the fall, Foster Grandparents were back in the classroom virtually, via tablets and Zoom. Volunteers have conversations with children, read books together, do show and tell, interact with children during activities and help support language development. They were even able to "play" on the playground equipment — which may not have been possible in person — by using an iPad while on the playground structures.

While in the classroom, Brown typically ate what the children ate; but with the switch to virtual, he was able to change up his menu



and promote healthy eating from home. Brown showcased his favorite options, and the children love seeing what he's eating.

"Remotely, when they're eating, I try to eat too," Brown said. "I try to always have a piece of fruit. They noticed that I was eating bananas



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all the time, and they called me out on it; so I went to the store and got some oranges and grapes too.”

Foster Grandparents have had to get creative with how they interact with the children, and Brown returned to a long-forgotten passion by drawing pictures for kids that appeal to something they like and mailing it to the teacher to present in class.

“When I was in high school, I wanted to major in art, and then I decided I didn’t have any talent,” Brown said. “And that kind of went by the wayside for several decades. This has got me started doing it again, so I’m really grateful for that. It’s like it has unlocked a whole new part of my personality or talent.”

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a Foster Grandparent for Brown is getting to watch the kids learn new concepts and see how that starts to feed

into their self-esteem and sense of identity and individuality.

While the Foster Grandparent Program provides responsibilities to older adults looking to remain active, Brown says the impact Foster Grandparents can make is just as valuable.

“It’s so beyond just having something to do,” Brown said. “It’s beyond ‘making a difference.’ It is making a difference, but one can actually see the difference that’s being made. It’s not theoretical; it’s real.”

To become a Foster Grandparent, volunteers must be at least 55 years old and able to serve 20 hours or more a week. Those interested in the Foster Grandparent Program should contact Sam Bates at 402-875-9320 or visit www.communityactionnetwork.org. 



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Seniors Foundation Flag Day Parade Supports Aging Partners



Seniors Foundation, in partnership with Veterans Freedom Music Festival, enjoyed a spectacular day and turnout at their first drive-thru Flag Day Parade on Sunday, June 13, at Victory Park in Lincoln. The Flag Day fundraising event was a pivot away from Seniors Foundation’s annual Keystone Award Luncheon, which had to be canceled two years in a row due to COVID-19 safety precautions.

As a safe, stay-in-your-car activity, the Flag Day event included informational signage along the route about Aging Partners and a variety of music attendees enjoyed from their cars. Seniors Foundation Executive Director Gina Cotton

gave an enthusiastic response about the event turnout.

“Even though we have missed our annual Keystone event the last couple of years, I could not be more thrilled with the overall community engagement and support for our event,” Cotton said. “Lincoln has always been a great advocate for veterans and seniors, and this event at Victory Park demonstrates and reinforces that tremendous support. We may even consider expanding this to an annual event.”

Providing financial support for the event were Flag Day title sponsors Cada Law Offices and Carpets Direct. Partner level sponsors were Bryan Health,

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“This could not have happened without the great support from our many sponsors,” she said. “Their advocacy and financial support are vital to the success of an event like this and for the future success of the Seniors Foundation.”

Seniors Foundation supports Aging Partners, the Lincoln-Lancaster County area agency on aging, which works to ensure the independence and full life of the seniors it serves. With assistance from Seniors Foundation, a new volunteer program called NeighborLNK recently was created to help keep homebound seniors healthy, connected and independent during the physical isolation required by the pandemic.

If you are interested in learning more about Seniors Foundation or making a financial contribution, call 402-441-6179 or visit its website at seniorsfoundation.org. 



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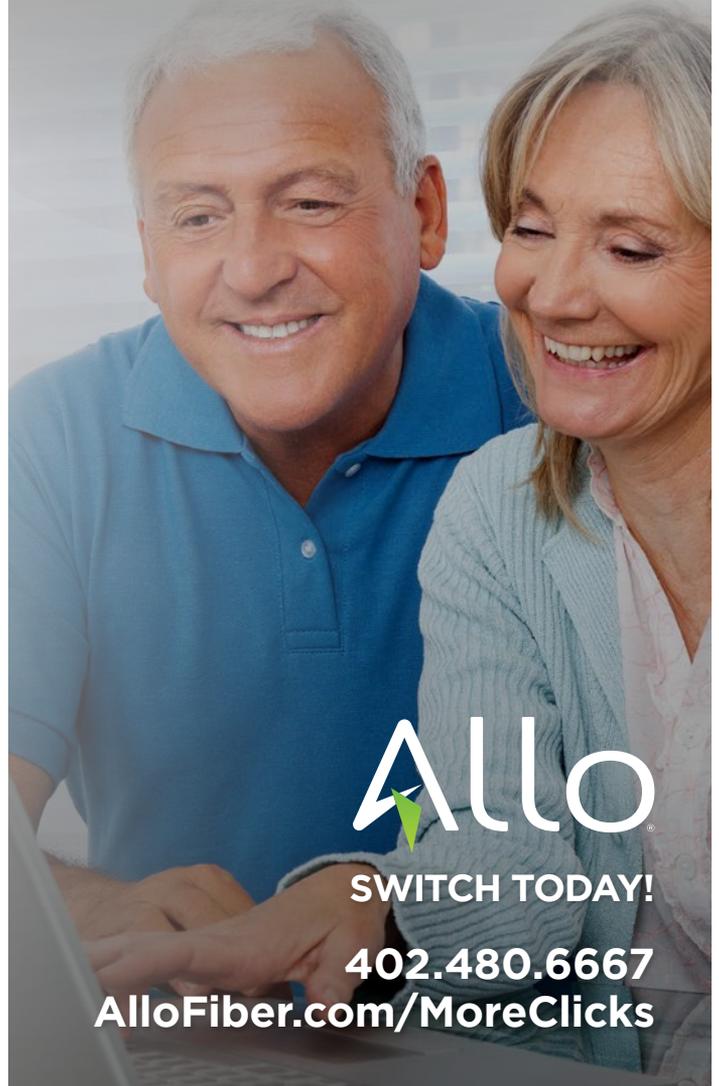
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Find Your Way Around Without Driving: StarTran a Safe Option for Riders

Lincoln's public transit system, StarTran, has gone through countless transformations throughout the years. It was established in 1883 when Lincoln Street Railway initiated the first horse-car line, and numerous alterations to its name and services have occurred since then.

While constant change was the theme of 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, StarTran has continued to offer its reliable services to the public.

StarTran also takes precautions to ensure riders' safety, including doing employee temperature checks, installing barriers to keep operators safe, encouraging social distancing by blocking off rows of seats and utilizing rear door entry when possible. Riders and operators must wear a face mask. Since the beginning of the pandemic, StarTran has provided more than 82,000 face masks to riders who didn't have one. Buses are sanitized with an electrostatic sprayer on all surfaces nightly.

The precautions will proceed for the time being and will be considered even past the pandemic.

"We continue to build upon safety measures that we have taken during the pandemic," said StarTran Transit Manager Mike Davis. "For example, we will continue to have operator barriers in the buses and we will continue to make hand sanitizer available on buses. We will also continue to pay attention to cleanliness as we make purchases including continuing to purchase easy to clean waterproof seats."



Constantly Adapting

In 2021, StarTran has seen about a 40 percent decrease in overall ridership compared to pre-pandemic levels. During the peak of the pandemic, the decrease was as much as 50 percent. StarTran's Paratransit service, which offers door-to-door service for individuals with disabilities, is returning to pre-pandemic rider levels.

Because of the fluctuation in rider levels, StarTran constantly made adjustments by reducing or increasing service temporarily on certain routes.

In April 2020, StarTran began its on-demand microtransit service, a same day door-to-door service called VanL NK.

"We knew not everyone wanted to get on a bus at the height of the pandemic," Davis said.

"VanL NK service is ordered through an app and costs \$5 per one-way trip. It is still a ride-sharing service; however, the vehicle used is smaller than a bus. Customers select

any local pickup and destination and a VanL NK vehicle is dispatched for same-day service. VanL NK efficiently fills empty seats on StarTran's Paratransit service.

The idea for VanL NK was in the works before the pandemic, but StarTran accelerated implementation to offer a different service for riders. Davis anticipates VanL NK proceeding into the future, but ultimately it depends on availability and is subject to change.

"The pandemic has given us the opportunity to learn about that service and how it can be used in the future," Davis said. "Being able to look at using that service for evening service when ridership on fixed route buses is not that high, or using it for the first mile or last mile to get someone to a fixed bus route."

Frequent service changes have created some challenges for StarTran, one being the need for more bus operators.

"Many of our drivers are driving as a second career," Davis

said. “Some younger seniors are looking to work a few more years, and StarTran is always in need of operators interested in driving a bus — especially those who are customer-focused, wanting to meet and talk with others.”

Drivers need a commercial driver’s license (CDL), but it is not required upon hire and StarTran provides CDL training. Visit startran.lincoln.ne.gov for more information.

Give it a Try

StarTran has been running fare free on fixed routes for much of the pandemic. While this is subject to change, the transit service will give advance notice. StarTran has been using federal transit COVID-19 funds to offset the loss of revenue. When the service returns to regular fare rates, reduced rates will be available for low-income riders, seniors and disabled individuals.

Because there is no cost to ride on these routes, it is a great time to give it a try, Davis said.

Recently, StarTran has enhanced 27 bus stops by adding amenities such as shelters and benches — and more are planned to be upgraded in the future.

StarTran services high-demand areas such as hospitals, shopping centers, big retail stores, the Center for People in Need and Senior Centers.

Davis said StarTran is looking to continue to increase frequency, which makes it easier for riders to get on their way and expand hours later into the evening on additional routes.

“We’ve worked hard to make transit easily available. We are always analyzing and finding new ways to put our bus stops within close proximity of most of the population,” he said.

StarTran will revise its Transit Development Plan this year, which is done every five years to assess where new services are needed and how the population has changed.

“We want seniors to be involved in that process; if something doesn’t work well, this is the time to tell us,” Davis said.

Public meetings and online opportunities for comments will begin this summer with a draft of the plan to be completed by the end of this year.

You can also contact StarTran (see contact information at the end of this article) to be put on an email list to be notified when Transit Develop Plan public meetings take place.

StarTran Offers Tools to Help

To help individuals increase their confidence in riding, StarTran offers a variety of tools on its website, startran.lincoln.ne.gov.



The online trip planner can help people determine a route and schedule to make the best use of their time. Other information includes instructions on how to ride the bus or use the bike racks, passes and fare information, VanLNK and Paratransit information, and a bus tracker.

“This helps you predict exactly when a bus will arrive so you don’t have to wait a long time before leaving your home,” Davis said.

If you have additional questions regarding any of the routes, schedules, or services offered, call StarTran Customer Service at 402-476-1234 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 

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Time Apart Brings Opportunity to Learn

When their locations closed last year due to COVID-19, Aging Partners Senior Center managers and other staff took to their phones to call participants to see how they were doing, talk about their health and provide resources.

These conversations allowed Aging Partners staff to get to know their clients even better and to help abate some older adults' fears and uncertainty about the pandemic. It also provided them an opportunity to share details about community resources and information regarding independent living.

Since the onset of the pandemic, senior center managers estimate that they've made more than 9,000 wellness calls. Downtown Senior Center Manager Denise Howe, for example, believes she averages about 100 phone calls per week, but notes she's found a silver lining amid the pandemic and the center closures: deeper relationships.

While Howe has managed her location for 10 years, she said overseeing daily operations doesn't typically leave a lot of time for her to sit down and talk to folks one-on-one — until now.

"I know these individuals so much better now after talking with them on the phone every week," she said.

Howe said she has learned more about her participants' specific challenges and needs, and if they have any family members to check on them, which has been especially important during the pandemic. Along with helping individuals register for their COVID-19 vaccines, she's offered meal deliveries and other supportive services.

On occasion, she also has provided emergency mental health crisis phone numbers or called the Lincoln Police Department for a wellness check to ensure they are safe. But some of her favorite calls involved playing her guitar and singing happy birthday to a few participants.

"Making these phone calls has been a blessing to me," Howe said.

For many, knowing Howe or another manager or staff member was going to call each week helped them feel like they weren't forgotten.

"Through this experience, I've learned that our clients are resilient and hopeful," Howe said. "I'm really amazed at how well they've weathered the storm."

In addition to the wellness calls, Howe has been entering data for the meal delivery program.

"I really believe our managers who are delivering meals are the real heroes," she said. "They are out there in rain or sun, snow or sleet doing the hard work to deliver those meals. They are our eyes and ears to how



Downtown Senior Center Manager Denise Howe has kept in touch with her clients over the phone during the pandemic and looks forward to seeing them again in person soon.

these folks are doing, and I appreciate them."

Along with feeling a newfound appreciation for their work, senior center managers and staff have created new ideas about how to tailor future programming, including nutrition, cooking for one and technology demonstrations.

While Howe and her counterparts have enjoyed their regular phone calls, they definitely look forward to the centers reopening so they can continue these conversations with their participants face to face. **lw**

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Planning Ahead

Veterans Service Center Here to Help

Under the direction and guidance of the Veterans Service Committee, the national accredited staff of the Lancaster County Veterans Service Center assists and advises armed forces veterans, along with their spouses, widows, family members and dependent children about the federal, state and local benefits available.

“We serve a diverse group of veterans from age 18 to those in their 90s,” said Rick Ringlein, County Veterans service officer.

Service staff, who are veterans themselves, can counsel the more than 16,000 county veterans about issues they may be facing and direct or refer them to the appropriate professional services.

“We’ve all been through the process. We’re problem-solvers for veterans,” Ringlein said. “We might not be able to help in every situation, but we’ll sure try. We’re here to help and here for you. Thank you for your service.”

The most common issues staff help with include filing and processing the Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans’ service-connected

compensation claims and non-service-connected disability pension claims, as well as claims for local, state and federal benefits. Staff ensure all applications are properly completed and submitted to the appropriate agency.

They can assist with applications for Nebraska Veterans’ Aid Funds and wartime veterans claims for Lancaster County Veterans Aid Funds, admission to the Nebraska Veterans Home system and securing Department of Veteran Affairs federal education benefits and state tuition waivers.

Service officers aid veterans and dependents in obtaining missing or replacement military medals, ribbons or badges; correct errors on military records; and help surviving spouses secure Department of Veteran Affairs death and burial benefits.

They also can advise veterans about the VA guaranteed home loan program and provide assistance in obtaining Certificates of Eligibility.

Veterans Service Center staff also attend community events to share information about the

veterans programs available and topics relating to veterans’ affairs.

The Lancaster County Veterans Service Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 4 p.m. at 605 S. 10th St., Room 373; enter on the north side, just south of the Hall of Justice. Parking is available on the street and in the city-county lot on the corner of 10th and “K” streets. The Veterans Service Center also can be reached at 402-441-7361, rringlein@lancaster.ne.gov. For more information, visit www.lancaster.ne.gov/484/Veterans-Service-Center.

To find a Veterans Service Center in another county, visit veterans.nebraska.gov/cvso. 



We’re problem-solvers for veterans.

We’re here to help, here for you and thank you for your service.”

– Rick Ringlein,

County Veterans service officer



The Lancaster County Veterans Service Center is available to help veterans and their families.

End-of-Life Doula: What They Are and How They Can Help

While doulas are more commonly known for their support during the child-birthing process, an end-of-life doula is a nonmedical professional who's trained to care for a person's physical, emotional and spiritual needs during the dying process.

Viewing the latter role as equally important, retiree Jen Davidson recently has devoted her time to helping fulfill end-of-life needs for those within her community.

"I'm passionate about this line of work; it feels so right to me," Davidson said. "My life has evolved to this point."

The Journey to Nebraska, to a Doula

Davidson, 76, previously worked in education for 44 years as a music teacher and arts consultant to music, art, theater and dance teachers. She helped author a successful K-8 music textbook series that led to workshops in nearly all 50 states and across Europe.

She also became a certified mediator and internationally certified facilitator while leading strategic planning with an emphasis on culture change in schools.

Davidson retired in 2010 and, after having lived in nine states, had the desire to live in a new place. She made a list that compared her requirements with cities she had visited, and she narrowed it down to one: Lincoln.

"I love it," she said. "Nebraska is a well-kept secret."

She bought a house and moved to Lincoln in November 2010, spending the first 18 months of retirement relaxing and adjusting to her new life in the city.

"Then I got restless and went back to school," she said.

After completing three years of coursework, Davidson became a licensed lay pastor at First-Plymouth Congregational Church and was ordained by the United Church of Christ in 2017. During that time, she also traveled to North Carolina for two years and became a certified spiritual director.

In her volunteer work at First-Plymouth, Davidson leads a group called Third Chapter Ministries for those age 55 and over, focusing on their spirituality. She also oversees a women's spiritual formation group, and following her diagnosis for breast cancer in 2018, she began leading a small cancer ministry group.

"My cancer diagnosis really brought the whole death and dying thing front and center," she said.

Davidson began studying the aging and dying process, and she also attended a palliative care workshop for chaplains at Harvard Medical School in Boston.

When the pandemic forced her into isolation, she spent six months working online with Commonweal in California to create a training guide for leaders worldwide detailing how to facilitate cancer support groups electronically. And at some point in that process, she heard about end-of-life doulas.

"That sounded like what I

wanted to do next," she said.

So in November 2020, she began her journey in end-of-life doula training and certification through TheDyingYear.org in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Davidson found she had the experience and knowledge to become an end-of-life doula, combining all her previous roles of teaching, mediation, facilitation, aging, spiritual direction and pastoral care. She was certified by the National End-of-Life Doula Alliance in December.

"Being an end-of-life doula gives me the skills to deepen my pastoral and spiritual direction training," she said. "I'm now able to walk beside patients and families in their final weeks as well as encourage healthy adults of any age and stage to think about and plan what a meaningful death would be."

What an End-of-Life Doula Does

While they don't provide any type of medical service or referral, end-of-life doulas do offer companionship, advocacy and support such as:

- Deep listening/communication with patients and families, sorting out end-of-life wishes.
- Assist with advanced directives.
- Provide and suggest resources.
- Support emotional and spiritual needs of caregivers.
- Coordinate with palliative and hospice care.
- Listen to and pastor social-emotional and spiritual distress for the individual.

- Suggest life review or legacy projects.
- Identify resources for low-income families.
- Help mediate family conflict.
- Sit vigil with a patient who is actively dying.
- Help plan rituals (funerals in homes and mortuaries, celebrations of life, traditional and green burials).
- Support grief and bereavement, both anticipatory and following death.

Although an end-of-life doula provides these services, it is also available through others such as hospice teams, pastors and funeral directors. But the benefit of an end-of-life doula is that they have additional training in advocacy, advanced directives and other resources.

The training and certification reminded Davidson of the important role of listening.

“I want to listen and ensure the person is heard,” she said. “I listen, and then kindly offer help, resources, options or suggestions. I am committed to the dying process and the relationship.”

Davidson also supports the family of a patient and continues to assist them after the death.

“Dying is a community experience,” she said. “It doesn’t just affect the person who dies; it also affects their family, friends, neighbors, medical team and others in their life.”

Finding Her Place

Davidson appreciates being able to help others through this role and offers her services free of cost. She recommends that individuals start thinking about the dying process when they are diagnosed with a chronic illness.

“That’s the time to begin these conversations about the goal of your care, what kinds of things you’re concerned about and talking to your family about your wishes,” she said.

For those faced with terminal illnesses, she encourages them to be proactive.

“People often wait too long to call,” she said.

To find out more about end-of-life doulas or to contact Davidson, visit nedalliance.org.

“I want everyone to know that the dying process can be done respectfully, tastefully and intentionally,” Davidson said. “It can be a beautiful part of the human journey.” 



Jen Davidson is passionate about her work as an end-of-life doula.

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Reconnecting After the Isolation of the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced everyone to make adjustments. As a result, many have faced a sense of isolation from having to work at home to quarantining away from family and friends or avoiding large groups. This has led to increased loneliness for some.

A National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report cites that about a quarter of Americans ages 65 and over are socially isolated, and 43 percent of those 60 and over describe feeling lonely.

Loneliness and social isolation are different though. Loneliness is an emotional feeling, while social isolation is a measurable issue that occurs when someone is unable to meaningfully connect with others.

“Both of these can be harmful to your health, but having few social connections has been found to be worse than feeling alone,” said Dr. Dave Miers, PHD, LIPC. “The pandemic has worsened social isolation, taking away many of our meaningful social connections.”

Some have been able to stay connected with family and friends by phone, video chat, or a visit from a distance through glass or other ways. But there are countless others who have found it difficult to have those connections.

While infection rates have been declining throughout the area and vaccination rates increase, it’s still important to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s directions. Meanwhile, lives appear to be slowly moving toward a more familiar normal with added opportunities for more frequent face-to-face social connectedness than has been the case throughout the past year.

Rebuilding Social Connectedness

There are several ways to rebuild social connectedness:

- **Volunteer:** Many older adults were volunteering in various ways and some of those options were shut down due to the pandemic. However, many opportunities have reopened as hospitals and businesses are looking for volunteers who can safely give their time. Research shows volunteering is linked to improvements in mental and physical health in older adults, and it decreases feelings of loneliness.
- **Learn a new skill:** Read a book, enroll in a course, computer class, fitness class, painting class or

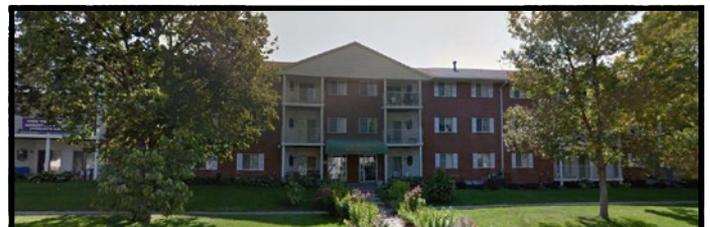
anything that will help expand your mind and meet new friends. Many local museums as well as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute have classes and opportunities.

- **Exercise:** Staying active is vital for health, longevity and mental and physical health. Find time in your schedule for a little exercise routine such as a daily walk, bike ride or joining an organized class.

Aging Partners has more than 40 exercise programs (including chair exercise) available on LNKTV Health YouTube at youtube.com/LNKTVhealth. Aging Partners exercise programs also can be viewed every morning on LNKTV Health and LNKTV City television. Program schedules are available at LNKTVhealth.lincoln.ne.gov and LNKTVcity.lincoln.ne.gov. The channels can be found on these Lincoln cable television systems:

- LNKTVCity (ALLO – channel 2, Spectrum – channel 1300, Kinetic – channel 5)
- LNKTV Health (ALLO – channel 3, Spectrum – channel 1301, Kinetic – channel 10).

Identify barriers that could prevent you from



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socially connecting with others. If you struggle with technology or connecting to the internet, talk to a friend or family member for help. If you lack transportation, reach out to discover resources available to help get you where you want to go. See page 35 for information about transportation options.

Connecting for Assistance

Depression is not a normal part of aging.

“If you are having symptoms of depression and feeling down, sad or hopeless, please reach out for help,” Miers said.

If you are having thoughts of self-harm, call the National Suicide Help Line at 1-800-273-8255.

The Bryan Medical Center West Campus mental health emergency room is available 24/7 for mental health emergencies and has a senior mental health unit available.



Bryan Heartland Psychiatry is available for medication management at 402-483-8555. Bryan Counseling Center can be reached by calling 402-481-5991. Contact the Bryan Independence Center for substance use evaluations at 402-481-5268.

A free and confidential screening for mental health can be taken at www.bryanhealth.com/services/counseling-mental-health.

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Reetz Helps Raise Awareness for Parkinson's, Lincoln Resources

Parkinson's disease is the second-most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's and is the 14th leading cause of death in the U.S.

It's estimated that 1 million Americans and 10 million individuals worldwide have been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, with 60,000 new cases diagnosed in the U.S. each year.

Parkinson's is associated with the progressive loss of motor control such as shaking, tremors at rest and lack of facial expression, as well as non-motor symptoms such as depression and anxiety.

For Brian Reetz, Parkinson's has a personal impact — his mom, 75, was diagnosed with Parkinson's more than 20 years ago.

Prior to his mom's diagnosis, Reetz didn't know much about Parkinson's disease; but in May 2020, he joined the Parkinson's Foundation's fundraiser and awareness walking event, Moving Day, online. Not long after the event, Reetz reached out to the organization to become more involved.

"I was so impressed and wanted to do more," he said.

In July 2020, Reetz became a volunteer advisory board member for Parkinson's Foundation Heartland based out of Kansas City.

By getting involved with the foundation and learning more about the disease, it helped him understand more about what his mom is dealing with and the symptoms she is experiencing.



"The resources that the Parkinson's Foundation provides is immeasurable," he said.

The foundation works to make life better for individuals affected by the disease by improving care and advancing research, advocacy and education.

Through his involvement, Reetz said he's learned that staying active helps fight some of the symptoms.

What is Parkinson's Disease?

Scientists believe the neurodegenerative brain disorder is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. No two people experience Parkinson's the same way; however, there are some commonalities. The main finding is that those diagnosed with Parkinson's have a loss of

dopaminergic neurons in a specific area of the brain.

Genetics cause about 10 to 15 percent of all Parkinson's diagnoses. Scientists have been studying the DNA of those diagnosed with the disease to gather data and understand what is responsible for the cause, slowing down or stopping the disease's progression. The Parkinson's Foundation offers free PD GENERation testing, a saliva swab for DNA to further understand the disease.



The resources that the Parkinson's

Foundation provides is immeasurable.

— Brian Reetz

Symptoms

Parkinson's symptoms present differently from person to person, but most often they include tremors; slowness of movement and rigidity; cognitive impairment and dementia; mood disorders; difficulty with balance, swallowing, chewing and speaking; and other non-motor symptoms.

Symptoms of early Parkinson's include:

- Tremor: a slight shake or tremor in the hand or chin, not due to exercise, stress, injury or medicine.
- Micrographia: handwriting has gotten smaller or cramped. Unrelated to Parkinson's, some changes in how an individual writes can be due to age, stiff hands or fingers and poor vision.
- Loss of smell: trouble smelling foods with strong smells such as banana, dill pickles or licorice.
- Trouble sleeping: sudden movements during sleep or acting out dreams when deeply asleep, consistent trouble sleeping.
- Difficulty moving or walking: stiff arms, legs or pain in the shoulders or hips.
- Constipation: having difficulty with bowel movements and straining every day. Not caused by lack of water or fiber in diet or medicines.

Continued on page 22.



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* Rated Five Stars for Quality Measures in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Jan. 2021 Report

** Updated information about nursing homes:
usnews.com/bnh

Reetz Helps Raise Awareness for Parkinson's, Lincoln Resources

Continued from page 21.

- Soft or low voice: a change in how loud your voice is for others.
- Masked face: an individual has a serious, depressed or mad look on their face even when not in a bad mood.
- Dizziness or fainting: feeling dizzy regularly when standing up from a chair can indicate low blood pressure and be linked to Parkinson's.
- Stooping or hunching over: an individual not standing as straight as they used to.

No single symptom means an individual should worry; but if a person has more than one symptom listed above, talking to a doctor is

recommended. Remember that other conditions and some prescription medications can cause some of these symptoms.

Men are 1.5 times more likely to have Parkinson's disease than women, and incidence increases with age. An estimated 4 percent of people are diagnosed before age 50.

Treatment

While there is no cure for Parkinson's, there are treatment options to help manage symptoms. Treatment is based upon the diagnosed individual's desires and symptoms.

Treatment can include medication, lifestyle modifications and getting more rest or exercise.

In some cases, individuals with Parkinson's may receive care from occupational, speech or physical therapists.

Medications can help manage problems with walking, movement and tremors. These medications increase or substitute dopamine, because those diagnosed with Parkinson's have low brain dopamine concentrations.

Dopamine is a chemical messenger primarily responsible for controlling movement, emotional response and the ability to feel pleasure and pain. In those with Parkinson's, their dopamine-producing brain cells are initially impaired and later die as the disease progresses. This results in problems

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with movement, which is why exercise is important to Parkinson's patients because it helps maintain balance, mobility and the ability to perform daily tasks. It also helps slow decline and symptoms and increases overall quality of life.

Parkinson's Resources in Lincoln

Reetz's desire to become involved with the Parkinson's Foundation inspired him to raise awareness for the disease and funds for research. He also began to notice support and resources in Lincoln aren't as easily known. He began working with Mollie Hope of Hope First Physical Therapy and Wellness LLC and Erin Neal of Home Care Assistance. Together, they created a Facebook page called "Parkinson's Lincoln, NE Community Group" to serve as a resource and online community



for diagnosed individuals and their family, friends and caregivers.

They also put together a document listing more information and resources such as speech, physical and occupational therapy contacts; exercise and support groups; organizations; in-home care; home modifications and assistive device resources; and financial assistance for

health care and equipment.

For more information, visit the Facebook group or contact Brian Reetz at briangreetz@gmail.com or 402-525-7026.

To learn more about Parkinson's, visit the Parkinson's Foundation at Parkinson.org, or call the free help line at 800-473-4636. 



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Celebrate National Falls Prevention Awareness Week

By Karen O'Hara, Aging Partners Health and Fitness

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has designated Sept. 20-24 National Falls Prevention Awareness Week. Aging Partners works with seniors, caregivers, family members and the community to increase public awareness about how to prevent and reduce falls among older adults.

Know the Facts

Falls threaten an older adult's safety and independence, and they generate enormous economic and personal costs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most fatal and nonfatal injuries among older Americans are caused by falls. An older adult dies from a fall every 29 minutes. Every 15 seconds, an older adult visits an emergency room for a fall-related injury. According to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, there are 233 emergency department visits, 70 hospitalizations and four deaths due to falls in Nebraska every week. In many cases, the injuries sustained are hip fractures and/or traumatic brain injuries. More than half of these injuries occurred at home.

Fall Prevention

According to the National Council on Aging (and contrary to popular belief), falling is not an inevitable result of aging. Through practical lifestyle adjustments, evidence-based interventions and community partnerships, fall numbers will decrease among older adults.

To help reduce fall risk, adhere to the following tips provided by the NCOA:

Find a Good Balance and Exercise Program

Look to build balance, strength and flexibility. Aging Partners offers two evidence-based fall prevention programs: Tai Chi – Moving for Better Balance, and Stepping On – Building Confidence and Reducing Falls. For more information about these programs, call 402-441-7575.

For seniors wanting to increase their strength and fitness, the Aging Partners Fitness Center, located at 555 S. 9th St., is currently open. Call 402-441-7575 for more information.

Fall Risk Assessment

Talk to a health care provider and ask for a fall risk assessment and share your history of falls.

Review your Medications

Regularly review medication with a doctor or pharmacist. Ensure side effects aren't increasing your fall risk. Remember to take medications only as prescribed.

Check Your Vision

Have your vision and hearing checked annually, and keep your eyeglasses updated. Good eyesight and hearing ability are key to staying on your feet.

Keep the Home Safe

Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe and install grab bars in key areas.

Talk to Family Members

Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Falls are not just an older adult issue. To learn more about protecting yourself and your family from falls, please visit ncoa.org/older-adults/health/prevention/falls-prevention. 



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Debunking Fall Myths

Myth: Falling happens to other people, not me.

Fact: One in four older adults fall every year in the United States, resulting in about 36 million falls.

Myth: As long as I remain at home, I can avoid falling.

Fact: More than half of all falls occur at home.

Myth: If I limit my activity, I won't fall.

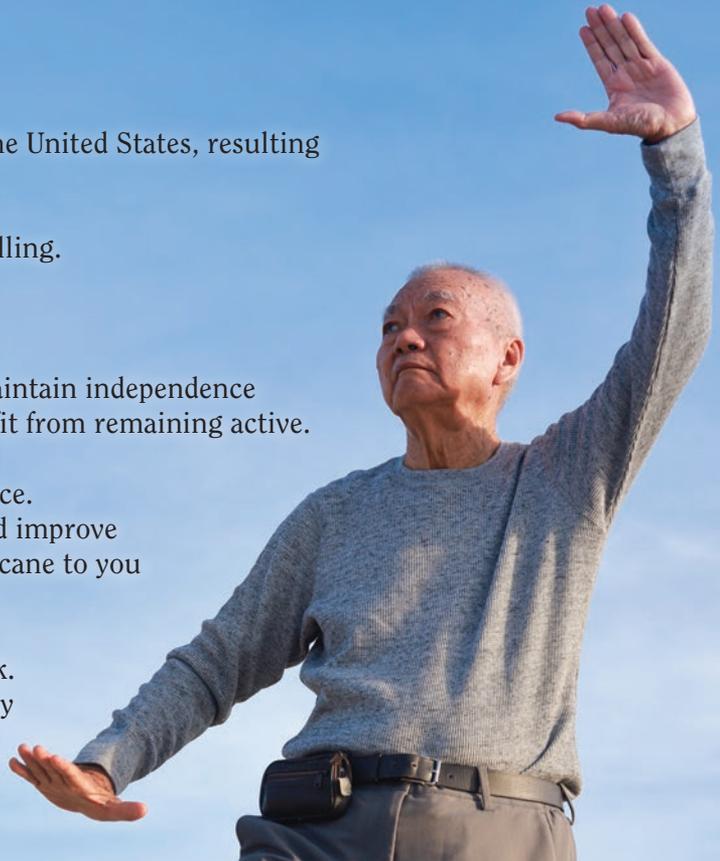
Fact: Performing physical activities helps you maintain independence because your strength and range of motion benefit from remaining active.

Myth: Using a walker or cane increases dependence.

Fact: Walking aids help older adults maintain and improve mobility. Have a physical therapist fit the walker/cane to you and instruct you in its safe use.

Myth: Taking medication doesn't increase fall risk.

Fact: Medications affect everyone differently. They may sometimes make you dizzy or sleepy.



Drink Up & Beat the Heat: Understanding Dehydration

SUMMERTIME CAN BE A DANGEROUS TIME, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE A SENIOR. DID YOU KNOW THAT AS WE AGE THE SENSATION OF THIRST DIMINISHES? WHEN YOUR BODY DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH FLUIDS IT CAN BECOME DEHYDRATED.

COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

- Dry mouth
- Tiredness
- Fatigue
- Decreased urination
- Sunken eyes
- Dark yellow urine
- Muscle cramping
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded

ACTION:
Drink water



SERIOUS DEHYDRATION SYMPTOMS:

- Rapid heart rate
- Fainting
- Confusion or disorientation
- Diarrhea or vomiting lasting longer than 24 hours
- Trouble with movement or walking

ACTION:
Go to ER or contact your physician/NPP right away.

If you have suffered dehydration in the past, talk with your doctor about prevention strategies and actions. You have unique health needs, so always follow the recommendations of your doctor and together you can **BEAT THE HEAT** and stay healthy at home!

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Eat to Your Health

The Benefits of Local Farmers Markets

By Devin Mueller, Aging Partners Nutrition

Summer is here! Most of us are probably grilling, spending time outside with friends and family, enjoying time at the lake or maybe taking a walk during sunset.

Local farmers markets provide benefits to the consumer, the farmers, and the area where the market is held. These local markets are known for their wide selection of food items, ranging from homemade pies to nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables. The variety of fresh fruits and vegetables is a well-known characteristic of farmers markets. This benefits the consumer directly because you are getting the absolute freshest version of these items. In addition to getting the freshest food available, you are getting it at the right time (in-season) and at a reasonable cost; all while supporting the local economy and local farmers.

These fresh fruits and veggies are packed with key essential nutrients and vitamins that can sometimes be lost when they are produced on a much larger commercial scale. Factors that can affect large commercial batches of fruits and veggies include how



they are picked; when they are picked; how they are handled; how they are stored; and whether or not they are organic, canned, frozen or if they are considered fresh. When you go to the local grocery store and pick out your favorite summertime fruit, whether it be

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strawberries or watermelon, you hope it is fresh. But there are some things to consider.

How much product do these stores have to move? How long has your fruit been sitting there? Is your fruit the freshest in the batch? With your local farmers markets, you can be sure those items have been picked that day or the day before. Farmers markets take the guesswork out of how to select the best produce. If you are uncertain, you can ask the farmer who is selling you the selected produce.

Visiting these local markets not only helps you obtain the freshest produce, but it also helps give rise to the local farmer both small and large. Some of these farmers and local shops depend on word of mouth as well as foot traffic to run their businesses.

The next time you think about going to the grocery store or if you just have some free time, visit your local farmers market! You will get fueled and fit while buying fresh. You will not only do your body good by enjoying the freshest food available, but you will also take pride knowing you are supporting the local economy with your purchase.

So, get out there and “get local!” Visit your local farmers markets and discover for yourself all the great benefits they have to offer. 

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Vegetable Salad

Ingredients

- 1 can whole kernel corn (12 ounce, drained)
- 1 can carrot (14 1/2 ounce, drained)
- 1 can green beans (14 1/2 ounces, drained)
- 1 can tomatoes (14 1/2 ounces, chopped)
- 1 tablespoon onion (finely chopped)
- 1 tablespoon green pepper (finely chopped)
- 1/3 cup tomato juice from canned tomatoes
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup vinegar
- 2 tablespoons corn syrup
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

Directions

1. Drain corn, carrots and green beans. Throw away liquid. Rinse vegetables and drain again.
2. Drain tomatoes. Save 1/3 cup of the liquid.
3. Mix corn, carrots, green beans, tomatoes, onion and green pepper in a large bowl.
4. Mix together all other ingredients in a separate bowl.
5. Pour over vegetables.
6. Cover and set aside for at least 3 hours in the refrigerator.

Notes

You can also use a 16-ounce bag of frozen vegetables in place of canned corn, carrots and green beans. However, analysis was done with ingredients as specified in the recipe.

Source: University of Wyoming, Cooperative Extension, Cent\$ible Nutrition Cook Book, p.fv-28



Living At Home

Study Shows Technology Might Help Decrease Loneliness

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports social isolation and loneliness can significantly increase a person's probability of serious health risks including dementia, heart disease, stroke, depression and anxiety. But a new study found that a specific type of technology might help relieve a little loneliness in older adults who live by themselves.

Valerie Jones, University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications associate professor, has been studying voice assistants from an advertising perspective for years, but recently moved to understand how these devices can help impact loneliness.

A digital voice assistant uses artificial intelligence, voice recognition and language processing algorithms to listen to specific voice commands and return relevant information or perform specific user-requested functions. Such devices include Amazon Alexa, Apple's Siri and Google Assistant, and can be used to play music, read headlines from the news and tell jokes, among other things.

In regard to the accessibility and customizability of these devices, Jones said, "They are easy to use because you don't have to learn an interface. They can help carry on conversations just by talking to them."

This led Jones to consider how voice assistants could impact loneliness in older adults.

"These devices can help remove barriers such as not being familiar with the technology or not having good vision, and help increase quality of life," she said.

A 60-day research study led by Jones was done with 16 participants from an assisted living facility in Lincoln. The study began in 2019 but ended early in March 2020 due to COVID-19.

The participants were trained how to use the Amazon Echo Dot and for the first 30 days were asked to interact with it five times daily from a chosen list of commands and questions. The second 30 days the participants could use it as little or as much as they wanted.

Using the UCLA Loneliness Scale, the overall results showed the devices did reduce loneliness among participants. Results also indicated that baseline loneliness — participants' initial responses on the scale — actually predicted certain types of anthropomorphic interactions with the device.

"Using the device as another person or companion — particularly having conversations with it and saying greetings, like 'good morning' and 'good night' — actually influenced the impact on loneliness," Jones said.

Because of the study's success, Jones is furthering research this fall with new collaborators at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and University of Nebraska Omaha on personalizing a routine with a digital assistant device that could reduce pain and loneliness in aging adults.

"Some studies suggest there is a connection between pain and loneliness, and we want to see if these devices can help manage, reduce or decrease perceptions of loneliness and pain in older adults," Jones said.

Participants will be split into two groups, with different types of Alexa routines that include varying degrees of personalization and prompts for activities that have been shown to reduce loneliness and pain. Such

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activities that may be helpful in terms of managing loneliness and pain may be playing a favorite song, devotional, or a reminder to take their medication.

Jones also will follow up with the previous study participants to find out if they continued using the devices during the social isolation of the pandemic.

“We’re interested in finding out if they’re still using it and how they used other forms of media and technology during lockdown,” she said.

The pandemic forced many high-risk individuals to stay home, including those living alone or in assisted living facilities. This experience made Jones’ research even timelier.

“We know that loneliness is an issue for a variety of age groups,” Jones said. “The CDC has talked about the loneliness epidemic even

before the COVID-19 pandemic started, and we know it has been exacerbated during this, especially for those who didn’t have the ability to get out, drive or had to stay in their facility.”

For many, the devices helped them connect to certain music they enjoyed, spurring memories and part of their identity they hadn’t had for a while.

“Our biggest interest is how the device can help connect users to others more, and get through some challenges to stay engaged, entertained, active, stimulated and interested in what the next day brings, regardless of what age you are,” she said.

Jones hopes that the two research studies can help determine if this technology has long-term benefits for those living alone.

“I want to see if we get to a place where these accessible, affordable



A local research study determined that using a digital assistant, such as Amazon’s Echo Dot, helped decrease perceptions of loneliness among older adults.

devices can be personalized and proactively help manage a person’s health and increase their quality of life — whether that’s playing a song they like to get through a downer, reminding them to take pain medication, or helping them call a friend or family member. That’s all worthwhile,” she said.

A list of Echo Dot interactions and commands developed for the study can be found at journalism.unl.edu/valerie-jones. **LW**



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**SPECIAL
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Staying Self-Sufficient

By Mitch Sump, Aging Partners program coordinator

I hope this article finds you all well and, at the risk of jinxing it, I hope it also finds you attending our senior centers and events.

Today is a beautiful spring day with cool breezes and a slight chance of showers. Flowers are blooming, farmers are planting, I've been fishing, and little critters are running around in the fields and pens (and throughout Lincoln according to news reports!)

The first thing that I need to do is introduce Mike Gardner, our new Lifeline emergency response system (ERS) coordinator. Mike has been with Aging Partners for several years, primarily driving the Downtown Senior Center routes. He replaces Suzanne Frazier who retired back in December. While we miss Suzanne, we know Mike is going to do a great job. When you run into Mike, make sure and congratulate him on his new challenge.

Transportation

Mike just couldn't bear to be away from his beloved buses, so he is also serving as our dispatcher. He's going to be a big asset in this role and he'll probably find the time to sneak in the occasional drive! So, our buses are now transporting people rather than meals; and although my drivers enjoyed the meal deliveries, I know they are much happier having their riders back.

Transportation is available in the city limits to and from riders' homes to their area senior center. We are also doing grocery runs again for senior center participants. On Tuesdays, we do grocery runs for the Lake Street Center, the Downtown Center on Wednesdays, and Belmont on Thursdays. The Northeast Center currently doesn't have a grocery run but should enough people indicate they would like one, we will certainly figure out how to make that work. To sign up for grocery runs and daily

transportation, please call either your area senior center or the Transportation Dispatch office at 402-441-7863 if you don't know which senior center is in your area. There is a suggested contribution of \$2 per boarding with donation boxes located at each senior center.

Lancaster County Public Rural Transit never stopped operating during the pandemic, and we are still running strong! If you want to visit friends, have lunch with family, do some shopping or other activity, consider riding Rural Transit! Cost to ride is \$2 per boarding with one boarding required outside the Lincoln city limits. For example, if you live in Lincoln and want to visit a friend in Bennet, your return trip boards in Bennet. We pick people up in the north half of the county on Mondays and Wednesdays and the south half of the county on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We alternate the routes on Fridays. Call 402-441-7031 with questions and to schedule a ride.

Lifeline

Our Lifeline ERS program is available to anyone in Lincoln and Lancaster County. We currently have three different options to fit clients' needs and budgets. Our 6900 Series uses the landline phone you currently have in your home, offering a sense of security for yourself and your family. Should you no longer have a landline phone and only use a cell phone, we can still give you that sense of security using a 7000 Series unit. Both units have a range of 500 to 800 feet depending on the house plan and materials. If you need a bigger range of movement, we can discuss the GoSafe Series that travels with you and is good anywhere in North America. All of these have their pros and cons but either choice will help you to stay safe and independent! If you want to discuss the options available, please call 402-441-8816. We are happy to meet with potential new clients in person or in a group.

Durable Medical Equipment

We recently conducted an electric fan drive to help people beat the heat this summer. If you need a fan, please call 402-441-3025 to request one. I am also going to encourage you to keep drinking water! The fan helps keep you cool, but it also speeds up dehydration so keep that glass close at hand!

Handyman

I won't get into details now, but we are working on some changes to better serve our clients. Stay tuned for some of the exciting changes we've got in the works.

Once again, someone is counting my words, so I've got to go. Be well and stay cool! 



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Todd Brauch

New final expense with no phone interview!

Reversed Roles: Grandmother, Grandson Care for Each Other

When Suzanne Johnson adopted her then 11-year-old grandson 16 years ago and raised him, she never expected him to eventually care for her.

The roles have reversed though over the last several years; and without the help of Nic Carlson, Johnson, who is now 87, would not be able to continue living at home.

For Carlson, 27, he said it seems natural to assist his grandmother.

“I felt like it was the right time and place,” he said.

When Carlson graduated from high school in 2011, he and his grandmother began looking at options so he could attend Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln. They decided to save costs by finding an apartment where Carlson could have his own space in the basement while still being in the home to help care for his grandmother.

Carlson graduated from college and worked for a while before Johnson’s health declined. For the last four years, Carlson has been his grandmother’s devoted caregiver and does all the cooking and other household chores along with managing her finances, prescriptions and transportation to doctor visits.

Facing Challenges and Realizing Rewards

Johnson appreciates her grandson’s help in making it possible to live at home.

“He always knows what to do and is always one step ahead of me in my care,” she said.

Prior to the pandemic, they had planned for Johnson to transition into an assisted living facility. Now, they are looking at the positives of their arrangement.

“We have an ironic situation where we are isolated due to COVID-19, but we can’t get away from each other,” Johnson said.

Being in such close quarters most of the time is a challenge in itself; they continually work at their relationship, and Johnson keeps in mind how Carlson is under stress of the daily caregiving duties.

“A caregiver takes on the work and the responsibility. It’s a hard job for him, but he does everything very well,” Johnson said. “I think the hardest part is making time for himself. Sometimes there just isn’t any.”

A few years ago, Carlson would take a weekend to

visit friends, but he is no longer able to leave Johnson overnight.

“I feel I never have a chance to turn it off,” he said. “Even when I’m asleep, I’m ready if she needs me.”

They have been using respite funds to help provide in-home services to lessen the load, thanks in part to assistance from Aging Partners, Meals on Wheels and Tabitha Home Health Care.

While the caregiving role can be taxing, Carlson finds it rewarding too.

“For me, the challenge is seeing the person I love and respect the most decline in front of me,” he said. “It’s the hardest job in the world, but I know she is getting the best care she can.”

For Johnson, she has enjoyed seeing the kind of person Carlson is, especially since he has put his life and career on hold to care for her.

“I know whatever he decides to do in the future,

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Nic Carlson and Suzanne Johnson are thankful to have the opportunity take care of each other for the last 16 years.

he'll be successful," she said. "I wish everyone could have a person like Nic, to know there's somebody who takes care of them because they love them. That sustains me and helps me feel like I belong in this world, even when I've lost other people in my life." **LW**

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Nebraska Family Caregiver Support

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- Go to the grocery store.
- Visit the doctor.
- Have lunch with a friend.
- Take a nap.
- Do anything else needed to help reduce stress.

A family caregiver is a person who provides ongoing care for an individual unable to care for themselves. Caregiving is rewarding, but also demanding and stressful. To supply "help for the helpers," the Nebraska Lifespan Respite Network offers information, education and support.

Your Southeast Nebraska Respite Coordinator can assist you with finding a provider in your area:

(402) 300-8448

southeastrespite@unmc.edu

For more respite information, including funding sources or becoming an independent respite provider, just call or click:

866-RESPITE (737-7483)
nrns.ne.gov/respite

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Call 402-441-7070 in Lincoln or toll-free, 800-247-0938.

AGING PARTNERS

1005 "O" St., Lincoln, NE 68508-3628,
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aging.lincoln.ne.gov
Serving Butler, Fillmore, Lancaster, Polk,
Saline, Saunders, Seward and York counties.

Key for Services: ▲ = Lancaster only

MISSION

Aging Partners plans, coordinates and advocates for older people in an eight-county area. Our mission is to enhance daily living, expand personal choices and educate the community in an effort to ensure the independence and full life of the people we serve.

Being Well

NUTRITION

402-441-3480

- **Meals** - Noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment, special holiday meals and light menu choices are available at some centers.

HEALTH AND FITNESS

- **Health Center** - Exercise classes, fitness equipment and certified personal trainers. ▲ 402-441-7575
- **Senior Health Promotion Center** - University of Nebraska Medical Center and Aging Partners provide health screenings. ▲ 402-441-6687
- **Caregiver Support Services** - Caregivers receive stress management, exercise, health and wellness assessments, and nutrition counseling. 402-441-7070
- **Fit to Care** - Free tips from a registered dietician and certified personal trainer to help decrease the effects of chronic tension.
- **Health Education Programs** - A variety of topics assisting individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices.

- **Health Screenings** - A variety of screenings include blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and bone density.
- **Exercise** - Pilates, yoga, stretch and tone classes are available at several locations. Daily fitness programs on LNKTV City (ALLO Channel 2, Spectrum Channel 1300 and Kinetic Channel 5) and LNKTV Health (ALLO Channel 3, Spectrum Channel 1301 and Kinetic Channel 10). ▲
- **Alzheimer's Disease** - Information and referral. 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

Living at Home

INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORT SERVICES

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Care Management Services** - Providing professional assistance in assessing needs, planning and coordinating home care.
- **Lifeline Emergency Response System** - 24-hour emergency access at the press of a button.
- **Supportive Services Program** - Eligible older persons can receive assistance with the cost of in-home services.
- **Durable Medical Equipment** - Providing items that address short- and long-term needs. Lightly used and/or new in-the-box items in stock including crutches, walkers, canes, wheelchairs, bath chairs and toilet risers.
- **Home Handyman Service** - Minor home repairs and maintenance including mowing, leaky faucets, painting, broken light fixtures, and heavy housework services. ▲ 402-441-7030
- **Subsidized and Independent Housing Resource Listings**

LONG-TERM CARE OPTIONS/ CARE MANAGEMENT

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)** - The Aging and Disability Resource Center assists seniors and persons of all ages with disabilities to obtain information, services and supports.
- **Home and Community-based Waiver Services** - State funded in-home services for those who are Medicaid-eligible and choose to live at home or use community-based services.
- **Senior Care Options** - Long-term care and assessment for Medicaid-eligible persons seeking nursing home care.
- **Assisted Living and Nursing Facilities Resource Listings**

Planning Ahead

HEALTH INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL COUNSELING

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Medicare** - what you need to know when you turn age 65; working past age 65; Parts A, B, D and Advantage Plans; Medicare supplements, yearly changes, updates and open enrollment; complaints, errors and appeals; low-income assistance programs.
- **We also help with:** Social Security overview; Medicaid; long-term care insurance; budgeting and bill paying; and Homestead Tax Exemption.
- **Legal Counseling** - Free legal advice and referral services for those who meet financial guidelines.

SENIORS FOUNDATION

The charitable foundation that plans, advocates for, and supports the programs and services of Aging Partners. To contribute or volunteer, call 402-441-6179 or visit seniorsfoundation.org.

Staying Involved

SENIOR CENTERS

Social events and activities, health and educational programs. Noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment, special holiday meals, brown bag and shelf-stable meals for at home. Transportation to the centers is available for a fee. Five centers in Lincoln and three in Lancaster County. ▲ 402-441-7158

LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY SENIOR CENTERS

- Asian Center: 402-477-3446
144 N. 44th St., Suite A, Lincoln
- Belmont Center: 402-441-7990
Belmont Recreation Center
1234 Judson St., Lincoln
- Bennet Center: 402-416-7693
American Legion Hall
970 Monroe St., Bennet
- Firth Center: 402-416-7693
Community Center
311 Nemaha Blvd., Firth
- Hickman Center: 402-416-7693
Hickman Community Center
115 Locust St., Hickman
- Lake Street Center: 402-441-7157
St. James United Methodist Church
2400 S. 11th St., Lincoln
- Downtown Center: 402-441-7154
1005 "O" St., Lincoln
- Northeast Center: 402-441-7151
6310 Platte Ave., Lincoln

Other Services

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938
Provides help for older adults and their caregivers to resolve questions and concerns about aging. Services include referrals, counseling, social work and care management. Start here to determine alternatives, and arrange services in the Aging Partners service area.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Ride within Lincoln to the Centers**
▲ 402-441-7158
- **Lancaster County Public Rural Transit**
Scheduled transportation to and from Lincoln and rural Lancaster County areas. Handicap accessible.
▲ 402-441-7031
- **Other Options in the Community**
Listings available at 402-441-7070.

LIVING WELL MAGAZINE

This quarterly publication features stories of interest to older adults and is mailed directly to their homes. To suggest a story idea or advertise with *Living Well*, call David Norris at 402-441-6156 or email dnorris@lincoln.ne.gov. To receive *Living Well* by email instead of in the mail, call 402-441-6146 or email delrod@lincoln.ne.gov.

LIVE & LEARN

A monthly TV show for and about older adults on LNKTV City (ALLO channel 2, Spectrum channel 1300, Kinetic channel 1005) and LNKTV.lincoln.ne.gov, or Live & Learn's YouTube channel at <http://lincoln.ne.gov/LiveAndLearn>.

- Mondays at 11 a.m.
 - Wednesdays at 5 p.m.
 - Thursdays at 7 p.m.
 - Fridays at 11:30 a.m.
 - Sundays at 3:30 p.m.
- These are minimum airing times. Show re-airs at various other times throughout the month.

CARE MANAGEMENT

All Counties: 800-247-0938
Care Management Coordinator
Jean Holt

- Butler County
Becky Romshek, 402-367-4537
- Fillmore County
Rhonda Stokebrand, 402-759-4922
- Polk County
Amy Theis, 402-747-5731
- Saline County: 402-441-7070
- Saunders County
Allison Blake, 402-416-9376
- Seward County
Becky Romshek, 402-367-4537
Amy Theis, 402-747-5731
- York County, Jerri Merklinger
402-362-7626

MULTI-COUNTY PROGRAMS

- Coordinator Jill Engel**
- Butler County Senior Services
Diana McDonald, 402-367-6131
 - Fillmore County Senior Services
Brenda Motis, 402-759-4922
 - Polk County Senior Services
Erin Dickey, 402-764-2252
 - Saline County Aging Services
Lori Moldenhauer, 402-821-3330
 - Seward County Aging Services
Kathy Ruzicka, 402-761-3593
 - York County Aging Services
Lori Byers, 402-362-7626

MULTI-COUNTY SENIOR CENTERS

Butler County

- David City Senior Center
592 "D" St., David City
402-367-6131

Fillmore County

- Exeter Senior Center
217 S. Exeter Ave., Exeter
402-266-2133
- Fairmont Senior Center
519 6th Ave., Fairmont
402-268-2831
- Geneva Senior Center
1120 "F" St., Geneva
402-759-4921

Polk County

- Osceola Senior Center
441 Hawkeye St., Osceola
402-747-8227
- Polk Senior Center
230 N. Main St., Polk
402-765-2311
- Shelby Senior Center
230 N. Walnut St., Shelby
402-527-5158

Saline County

- DeWitt Senior Center
202 E. Fillmore Ave., DeWitt
402-683-4325 or 402-520-0873

Seward County

- Milford Senior Center
105 "B" St., Milford
402-761-3367
- Seward LIED Senior Center
1010 Manor Drive West, Seward
402-643-4466
- Utica Senior Center
520 "D" St., Utica, NE 68456
402-534-3435

York County

- McCool Junction Senior Diners
c/o Village Hall
323 E. "M" St., McCool Junction
402-724-2525
- York Leisure Home (meal site only)
215 N. Lincoln Ave., York
402-362-5900
- York Area Senior Center
725 Nebraska Ave., York
402-362-2496

SENIOR CARE OPTIONS (SCO) AND MEDICAID WAIVER

- 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

Aging Partners News and Events

Call 402-441-7575 for Health and Fitness class and event information. aging.lincoln.ne.gov

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When you receive *Living Well* magazine by email, you have direct access to many services. Click your mouse on any website listed and you are linked directly to a service or advertiser's website. There are wonderful stories in every issue of *Living Well*. By visiting the Aging Partners website, you will find current and past issues. Call Deb Elrod at 402-441-6146 or email her at delrod@lincoln.ne.gov to sign up.



Health and Fitness

Aging Partners Fitness Center
555 S. 9th St.
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All are welcome at the fitness center. Cardio equipment, strength training equipment, free weights,

balance and other exercise aids are available.

There is a \$10 monthly suggested contribution for age 60 and over and family caregivers of any age. A \$15 fee is required for under age 60. A certified personal trainer is available at no additional cost by appointment only.

For most Health and Fitness classes, there is a \$4 per class suggested contribution for those ages 60 and over and family caregivers of any age. A \$5 per class fee for those under age 60 is required. Punch cards are available. Preregistration is required for all classes by calling 402-441-7575. Please register early as classes not having sufficient enrollment may be canceled.

Some Aging Partners Health and Fitness Classes, mini-sessions available via Zoom

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed a lot of things. However, it has not changed our need to stay active and exercise to maintain physical and mental health and prevent injury.

In addition to now offering in-person classes, we will continue to offer some of our health and fitness classes online. The online experience cannot compare to in-person group classes, but this format does have some great advantages.

Classes can be done from the comfort of your own home, eliminating the need for preparation or travel time. Each student will have a front row seat to better views of instruction and postures.

Zoom classes will open up 15 minutes before our scheduled online classes to allow for socialization, sharing and questions from students.

Contributions are welcome and can be mailed in. Suggested amounts are \$4 for those age 60 and over and family caregivers of any age or \$5 fee for those under age 60 for classes meeting one time per week and \$2/\$3 for classes meeting two times per week. Punch cards are available.

Classes that will be offered via Zoom include Qigong, Dance for Life, Chair Yoga, and Movement and Strength with Fun in Between.

Please call 402-441-7575 to register for classes. When online classes are available, you will be sent information about how to access Zoom and the specific classes you are interested in. Prior to the classes, you will need to download the Zoom app on your device. You will need to register in order to receive the access code to enter a class.

Evidence-Based Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance Classes

Evidence-based programs are supported by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Injury Prevention Program and the state of Nebraska Unit on Aging.

NOTE: Because all Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance classes are progressive, no registrations will be accepted after the fourth class of each session.

Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance (Level I)

Eastridge Presbyterian Church
1135 Eastridge Dr.
Tuesdays and Thursdays
11 a.m. to noon
July 20 through Oct. 7

This class is for people new to Tai Chi or those wanting to continue working on the basic Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance

eight forms. It is a fall prevention program that uses the principles and movements of Tai Chi to help older adults improve their balance and increase their confidence in doing everyday activities. Suggested contribution is \$2 per class or \$48 per session.

Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance (Level II)

Eastridge Presbyterian Church
1135 Eastridge Dr.
Tuesdays 1 to 2 p.m.
Fridays 11 a.m. to noon
July 20 through Oct. 8

This class is for people who have completed one or more sessions of Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance Level I. Classes are designed for people who want to continue with the traditional eight forms with less instruction and some variations. Suggested contribution is \$2 per class or \$48 per session.

Join us for a free 4-week mini session in July! Try out the classes below and then come September, join your new favorite workout class!

Qigong Refresh and Recharge

This ancient, meditative practice focuses on slow, gentle movements which help to relieve aching muscles and stiff joints, improve balance, flexibility and increase energy. Movements begin from a chair, move to standing forms, closing with seated stretches and stimulating breath exercises. This class is appropriate for individuals at all levels of ability.

- Mini-Session (Zoom only):
Thursdays, 2 to 3 p.m.
July 8 through July 29
- Mondays, 10 to 11 a.m. (Zoom only)
(12-week session)
Sept. 13 through Nov. 29

- St. Mark's Church
8550 Pioneers Blvd.
Thursdays, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.
(12-week session)
Sept. 16 through Dec. 16
(No class Nov. 11 and Nov. 25)

Dance for Life – NEW TIME ON WEDNESDAYS

Each class focuses on balance, strength and cardio health through a unique combination of dance steps done to popular oldies music. Synchronized movements isolate and strengthen muscle groups, increase heart rate and improve core stability. Participants warm-up from the chair, move to standing, transition to dance then cool down with standing and seated movements.

- Mini-Session (Zoom only):
Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
July 7 through July 28
- Mondays, 2 to 3 p.m. (Zoom only)
(12-week session)
Sept. 13 through Nov. 29
- Auld Pavilion
1650 Memorial Dr.
Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
(12-week session)
Sept. 15 through Dec. 1

Movement and Strength with Fun in Between

A fun, fit-filled 45-minute class consisting of a warm-up, followed by two low-impact aerobics songs and two strength sets repeated until cool down.

- Mini-Session (Zoom only):
Tuesdays, 2:30 to 3:15 p.m.
July 6 through July 27
- Tuesdays, 2:30 to 3:15 p.m.
(Zoom only)
(12-week session)
Sept. 14 through Nov. 30

Chair Yoga – NEW DAY

Chair yoga is one of the gentlest forms of yoga available. It is a unique style that adapts yoga positions and poses through creative use of a chair. Poses are done seated or the chair is used for support during standing and balance poses. Emphasis will be on breathing, balance and taking things at your own pace. Chair yoga is suitable for all ages, fitness levels and physical conditions. Beginners welcome.

- Mini-Session (Zoom only):
Wednesdays, 9 to 10 a.m.
July 7 through July 28
- Eastridge Presbyterian Church
1135 Eastridge Dr.
Wednesdays, 9 to 10 a.m.
(8-week session)
Aug. 11 through Sept. 29
- Eastridge Presbyterian Church
1135 Eastridge Dr.
Wednesdays, 9 to 10 a.m.
(8-week session)
Oct. 13 through Dec. 1

Foot Clinics/Senior Health Promotion Services

Vermeer Education Center
4000 S. 84th St.

Aging Partners Foot Clinics and UNMC Senior Health Promotion Services are by appointment only. Please call 402-441-7506 to make an appointment for clinic services.

Services are available to those age 60 and over. Foot care only will be available in July and August. During September, comprehensive foot care, blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol screenings, osteoporosis screenings and health education will be available. Ear care will not be available. A \$15 suggested contribution will help these services continue.

For schedule, please call 402-441-7506 or 402-441-7575.

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Aging Partners News and Events

Call 402-441-7575 for Health and Fitness class and event information. aging.lincoln.ne.gov

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2021 Streets Alive!

Sunday, Sept. 26
1 to 4:30 p.m.

Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln is hosting its 11th annual Streets Alive! Event in the South

Salt Creek neighborhood. Aging Partners Health & Fitness staff will be there to provide valuable wellness information.

Senior Center Events

It's Show Time!

Lincoln Firefighters Reception Hall
241 Victory Lane
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
\$5 show
\$5 round-trip transportation available

It's been a while and we've missed you! Join us for a fun-filled evening of music and getting reacquainted. We will be serving cookies, tea and coffee. Call 402-441-7158 for reservations.

Co-sponsored by Butherus, Maser & Love and Aging Partners.

In the case of a COVID-19 spike, Aging Partners reserves the right to reschedule, or cancel, the event.

Upcoming events:

- Chris Sayer, Thursday, Aug. 12
- Jimmy Mack and Kevin Shea, Thursday, Sept. 9

Nebraska History Lunch Series

Gere Library, 2400 S. 56th St.

\$6 fee for sack lunch

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Reservations and payments due the Monday before the event. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m.; program begins at noon. Call 402-441-7158 today to make your reservations. Seating is limited so reservations are required. Join us for a brown-bag lunch and a fascinating historical program by some of Lincoln's favorite historians.

- Wednesday, August 18
Jim McKee
History of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Chartered in 1869 as a land grant institution, the University of

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Nebraska-Lincoln has been open to all people of any “age, sex, color or nationality” in the words of its founding documents. Hear about the history of the flagship institution of the University of Nebraska system from one of Lincoln’s preeminent historians.

- Wednesday, September 15
Jeff Korbek
Lost Restaurants of Lincoln
Home to the beloved Miller & Paine cinnamon rolls, Lincoln boasts a restaurant history rich with delicious food and unique stories. Author and longtime Lincoln Journal Star restaurant critic Jeff Korbek remembers the Star City’s most memorable eateries in “Lost Restaurants of Lincoln.”

Wildlife Safari Park Drive-Thru and Holy Family Shrine

September 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Cost: \$20 (includes transportation, entry fee and lunch)

Stay comfortably seated as we venture through elk meadows, deer woods and pelican wetlands at the Wildlife Safari Park near Ashland. We’ll also visit the beautiful and unique Holy Family Shrine near Gretna. There is some walking with ample seating along the way. A sack lunch will be provided.

Seating is limited so call 402-441-7158 today for your reservation. Deadline is September 16.

Caregiver Event

Aging in Nebraska | Planning for Your Future

Tuesday, Aug. 17, at 5:30 p.m. CT
If you could see your future,

what steps would you take now to prepare for your next chapter? Join us for an online conversation on aging focused on caregiving and end-of-life planning, with information about all the resources available in Nebraska. This event will feature clips from *Fast Forward*, a new PBS documentary that takes a proactive look at aging. The discussion panel will include the film’s director Michael Eric Hurtig and some of the people featured, as well as experts on aging from around the state. Visit NebraskaPublicMedia.org/engage for more information about this online event.

Presented by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Nebraska Public Media and the University of Nebraska Omaha’s Department of Gerontology, with additional support from Aging Partners and Nebraska’s other Area Agencies on Aging. 

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A special invitation to the 57,200 age 60 and over adults, their families and caregivers residing in Butler, Fillmore, Lancaster, Polk, Saline, Saunders, Seward and York counties in Nebraska.

Your contribution helps Aging Partners publish the area’s premiere resource for those 60 and over. Join us in supporting healthy, full and independent living.

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