

LivingWell

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A publication of



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in Changing Circumstances**
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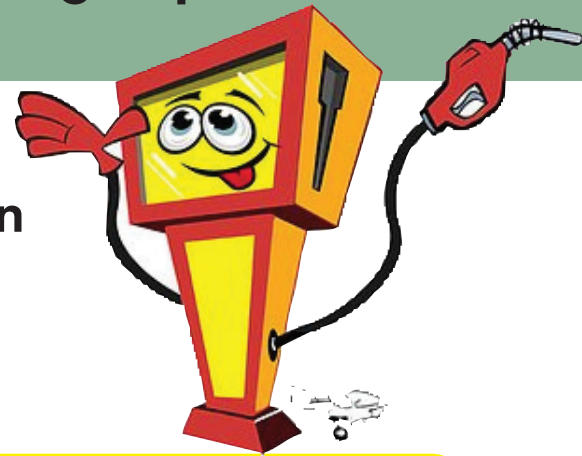
*Dee Aguilar has spent more than 40 years in the aging field
working to better the community for older adults.*





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Director's Corner

In this issue, we are very pleased to recognize and honor the career of retiring OLLI Coordinator Dee Aguilar. Dee is a great example of someone who took a passion for working with older adults and turned it into a long and highly rewarding career. She's also helped show young people what a great career choice gerontology and the aging field can be.

Dr. Julie Masters with the University of Nebraska Omaha Department of Gerontology said recently that "the traditional idea of working solely in a health care setting is being reshaped to include other opportunities

in education, business, and even agencies like Aging Partners. We've continually heard from employers who desperately need people who understand the aging experience."

The trends and metrics reinforce Dr. Masters' viewpoint. With society consisting of more-and-more older adults with each passing year, the need for more qualified, educated people in the gerontology and aging fields isn't going away anytime soon.

If you have a child or grandchild who is at that point where they're trying to determine what to do with the rest of their lives, I hope they'll consider the gerontology/aging field.

The continuing growth of our aging population doesn't just express the need for more professionals in the field; it screams it! From caregivers to social workers, to therapists and administrators; the possibilities are endless and the rewards plentiful.

I'm sure Dee Aguilar would agree. 



Randall S. Jones



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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

Aguilar Continually Learns, Pushes Herself

It was a job as a nursing home activity director in a small Missouri community that led Dee Aguilar on the trajectory to where she is today. And after more than 40 years of being employed in the aging field, she plans to retire January 2021.

Aguilar has worked for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since 2005. As coordinator, she leads a staff of three, serves as liaison to the university community, works

with member leadership and oversees the program's day-to-day operations.

OLLI, an adult learning membership program for those age 50 and over, is one of 124 such programs across the United States, offering more than 200 courses annually, along with social and cultural events, interest and travel groups.

After being a nursing home activity director, she worked in adult and continuing education at Southeast Community College.

She also was a recreation director at Lincoln Parks & Recreation and an activity director at a rehabilitation facility before working 10 years at the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging (now Aging Partners).

In 2001, she visited the University of Nebraska Omaha Department of Gerontology and spontaneously walked away with an application. As a nontraditional student, Aguilar worked in private education before going to OLLI in 2005 and completing her gerontology doctorate in 2011.

"My experience and desire to do more is what pushed me to complete my doctorate," she said.

The Future of Aging

Aguilar has watched the aging industry change during her career and has advocated for seniors in multiple ways. She was appointed by the Mayor's Office to the Aging Partners advisory committee for three years before being asked to join the Seniors Foundation. Aguilar has dedicated nearly nine years of service to the Seniors Foundation Board, and served as president for one year. She takes pride in sharing information about available community resources.

"Lincoln has a lot to offer for older adults, and I enjoy educating people on hidden gems such as Aging Partners and OLLI," she said. In addition, she enjoys connecting younger people with



Dee Aguilar, OLLI coordinator, will retire in January.



Lincoln has a lot to offer for older adults, and I enjoy educating people on hidden gems such as Aging Partners and OLLI.”

– Dee Aguilar

older adults through a variety of intergenerational projects.

Aguilar encourages students and younger generations to consider making aging a profession or incorporate it into their education and work experience. Even if not directly related to the job, everyone should have knowledge of the issues seniors face.

“I encourage people to explore opportunities in aging as part of their education,” Aguilar said. “It’s a benefit to anyone in a career that works with older adults to have some education in gerontology because you have to know how to communicate and understand the aging population.”

And Aguilar knows changes are coming as new generations begin to retire. She said delivery models for programs and interests in the future will be different because retirees are physically fit and in tune with what they want to do.

“They’re going to express more of what they want, and agencies will need to adapt,” she said.

Part of that will most certainly be a desire for lifelong learning, Aguilar said.

OLLI

In her 15 years with OLLI, Aguilar has watched membership grow from about 300 to more than 1,700.

“A quote by Leonardo da Vinci says, ‘Learning never exhausts the mind,’” Aguilar said. “No matter what point you are in life, the act of learning can bring the greatest enjoyment. Don’t let what you know prevent you from learning more.”

OLLI offers more than 200 courses during five terms taught by current or retired professors or experts in the field who volunteer their time. OLLI originated as Sharing Across Generations for Enrichment in 1992 but fell victim to budget cuts in 2002. Members then worked with university administration to keep it going, and in 2003 OLLI was founded and funded by The Bernard Osher Foundation.

Continued on page 6.

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Aguilar Continually Learns, Pushes Herself

Continued from page 5.

One of the biggest challenges now for OLLI is getting through the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We are being purposeful and moving forward, re-engaging members and looking at distance delivery programs,” Aguilar said. “We always try to meet the needs of our robust membership, but this has presented us with new challenges.”

Changes with COVID-19 happened quickly last year, stopping all face-to-face meetings. But within three weeks, OLLI began to deliver course content to members online using Canvas and Zoom.

“It was a big learning curve for our age demographic and the members we serve,” Aguilar

said. “But by the summer, we had more to offer even though it was challenging.”


During the summer, courses were held online or outside safely; but during the winter and spring terms, courses will continue to be online, or hybrid with some being in person and others online.

OLLI membership is required to take courses, and the membership allows a person to enroll in as many as they want. Membership dues are \$75 (August to July), and \$50 for January to July. A typical six-week course costs \$20, and some courses have additional fees. Scholarships are available for those needing assistance.

More information about courses, events and OLLI can be found at olli.unl.edu.

Continuing to Learn More About Herself in Retirement

Having grown up in Lincoln, Aguilar’s first plan in retirement will be to spend time with her family at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia before moving to Lawrence, Kansas, to live near family.

“My hopes are to be able to travel and try new things that excite me,” she said. “I am looking for new adventures, opportunities and a whole new discovery of who I am in retirement.” 

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OLLI is using the online platforms ZOOM and CANVAS to provide educational programming.

Here are a few examples:

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- Shakespeare on Page, Stage, Screen
- Organizing Your Estate
- Promoting Health & Preventing Disease – A Pharmacist's Perspective
- Understanding the Science of Happiness
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CANVAS

- All Shook Up: America in the 1950s
- A Slice by Slice Exploration of the Human Brain
- How to Manage Money During the Coronavirus
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A Legacy That Will Keep on Giving

By Tracie Foreman and Susan Winkler, Aging Partners Health and Fitness

When Peggy Apthorpe walked through the doors of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging's (LAAA) Lifetime Health program 28 years ago, she set the wheels of change in motion. A true visionary, she was determined to shift perceptions associated with aging. She became a voice for those who wished to age with dignity, grace and a sense of personal power. Apthorpe set the bar high for all who worked with this generation of adults.

In 1992, under the direction of a handful of innovative thinkers, fundraisers and leaders, the LAAA had become one of the organizations that helped put Lincoln on the map as a place adults age 60 and over wanted to live. Seniors were adopting healthier lifestyles in their quest to live longer and remain vital. Along with her Lifetime Health team consisting of a registered nurse, a community health educator, office manager, outreach worker and a handful of fitness instructors, Apthorpe jumped into creating fitness and community health education programs that paralleled those in larger cities across the nation.

The world was riding the wave of a technology explosion, the baby-boom generation was starting to move toward retirement, and funding sources were changing in the years just after the new millennium.

Apthorpe rose to each new challenge. A self-proclaimed "research junkie," she always had her finger on the pulse of innovative programs being offered to adults age 60 and over. The Lifetime Health staff worked hard to stay informed on upcoming

technology and new programming being developed with seniors in mind. Apthorpe encouraged her staff to create programs that would educate the community about a variety of health topics. She opened doors to partnerships with organizations that offered invaluable services to the older adult community.

Apthorpe guided her staff and the seniors they served through four directors, three agency name changes, several moves and deep budget cuts. During a particularly difficult financial year, the Lincoln City Council voted to remove Lifetime Health from the budget. Apthorpe and the agency director at that time worked hard to secure State and Federal funding that would enable Lifetime Health to move under the State umbrella. Soon after, LAAA became Aging Partners, and Lifetime Health became the Health and Fitness division of Aging Partners.

Apthorpe and her small but mighty team worked tirelessly to establish relationships and/or partnerships with churches, community centers, civic groups, universities, local businesses, senior centers, hospitals, clinics, rural communities and agencies that served diverse, low-income populations. Through these partnerships, seniors in eight counties were offered



Peggy Apthorpe, Aging Partners health and fitness coordinator, retired October 2020.

health/educational programs, health services, fitness classes, demonstrations, entertainment and much needed in-home services for caregivers.

The Senior Health Promotion Center came out of Apthorpe's desire to bring valuable preventive health services to low-income seniors. Throughout the past 19 years, that partnership with the University of Nebraska Medical Center's gerontology nursing program has enhanced the quality of life for hundreds of seniors.

Apthorpe's excellent grant writing skills resulted in Aging Partners' Health and Fitness division receiving a multitude of vital evidence-based program grants that would enable seniors to improve their lives through educational opportunities and group interaction.


She consistently exhibited a forward-thinking vision for programs that would meet the needs of seniors in all walks of life. Popular programs such as Pay Attention to Fall

Prevention and Only Leaves Should Fall were developed and implemented. Apthorpe's love and compassion for caregivers laid the groundwork for the Fit to Care for Caregivers program and the Celebration of Self for Caregivers annual conference.

Apthorpe embraced and encouraged healing practices and alternative approaches to traditional forms of exercise. She encouraged staff to become certified and teach practices such as yoga, tai chi and qigong. This interest led to several staff members becoming certified to teach the evidence-based Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance program that has been met with great support and enthusiasm by the senior community.

Most recently, the NeighborLNK program evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide support to isolated seniors. Apthorpe and her staff worked with the Mayor's Office to create and implement this vital client-volunteer program.

In her retirement, Apthorpe will continue to illuminate the paths of many. She will create opportunities, inspire dreams and build bridges. For those of us who were privileged to work beside her, we can say we are better for it.

Thank you, Peggy! 



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Providing Consistent Meals in Changing Circumstances



The Food Bank of Lincoln has taken the responsibility to help the community seriously since it was founded in 1982.

Serving 16 counties throughout 9,300 square miles in southeast Nebraska, the Food Bank addresses food insecurity and connected people to more than 8 million meals in fiscal 2019 alone. And when the COVID-19 pandemic became prevalent in the United States this past March, the Food Bank started to look at the potential situation for the next 60 to 90 days.

"What we didn't realize at the time was the long-lasting impacts," said Scott Young, executive director. "People know how to adapt and be resilient, but the pandemic is just one more thing. There were so many in distress pre-pandemic, and the pandemic has heightened distress for a lot of people. We continue to adapt as best we can."

Food Bank distribution sites went to no- or low-contact drive-thru options as things constantly



The Food Bank of Lincoln has moved to mobile distributions to protect clients, staff and volunteers.

changed. The direction was placed heavily on food and safety.

"We focused on food in, food out," Young said. "Pre-pandemic we had a number of things going on about food insecurity and poverty, but the pandemic forced us to focus on food solely."

At the drive-thru distribution sites, cars line up by the hundreds and trunks are popped open as staff

or volunteers put the pre-made food packages in.

During the summer of 2020, the Food Bank distributed 70 percent more product than in summer 2019. Thanks in part to funding from the CARES Act, government-related food items such as dairy, meat and produce were distributed along with shelf-stable items the Food Bank packaged themselves.



“We have distributed better, healthy produce more than we ever have in our history,” Young said.

COVID-19 Response

But distributing food during a pandemic comes with its challenges. The Food Bank closed its office doors to the public. Staff was split into two teams, working every other week to social distance as they continued to provide for the community.

“Our administrative team has worked side-by-side with our distribution staff,” said Alynn Sampson, director of community impact. “It’s been great to do the hard work of lifting boxes together.”

Volunteers from the National Guard and AmeriCorps helped when a good portion of the Food Bank’s volunteers were asked to stay home. The Food Bank is engaging with volunteers based on COVID-19 case



counts and infection rates. Check with the Food Bank for current volunteer opportunities.

“The pandemic has been a learning opportunity,” Young said. “We have all learned an enormous amount about what we do and why we do it. It put us in touch with the need in a greater way. We’ve learned a lot about the Food Bank and even more about the importance of food for people. The community has supported us in

ways we didn’t imagine.”

The Food Bank personnel express gratitude for the community’s financial and moral support.

“A lot of nonprofits don’t have the advantages the Food Bank has, and we are grateful for the community support,” Young said. “We have the whole community in mind.”

With things slowing down a

Continued on page 12.



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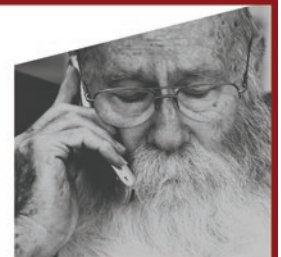
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Providing Consistent Meals in Changing Circumstances

Continued from page 11.

bit, the Food Bank is spreading the word about programs to help with food security.

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is providing food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people. The Food Bank helps individuals apply for the program that provides a set amount of money for food each month. This helps clients avoid having to stand in food lines and to be able to pick their own food items. It also helps provide a local economic benefit to local retail partners.

"We are typically a client-choice model," Sampson said. "SNAP allows people to select what they want and what is best for them."

The Commodity Supplemental

To see an updated list of distribution locations and times, visit lincolnfoodbank.org/get-food/food-distribution-schedule.

Food Program (CSFP) assists low-income persons age 60 and over with nutritious USDA foods. After eligibility, the Food Bank delivers 40 to 50 pounds of food to seniors every other month.

"This is a great way to get nutritious food to seniors who are medically homebound and can't make it to our mobile distribution sites," Young said.

For eligibility, an application or

additional information about these programs, call the Food Bank at 402-466-8170.

Looking Forward

The Food Bank knows the community will be dealing with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for all of 2021.

For the winter, permanent tents and outdoor heaters will be set up for staff protection at mobile drive-thru distribution sites. Due to

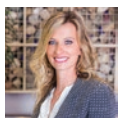


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inability to find protection or shelter, some rural sites have been reduced.

Staff also is looking to better help those the Food Bank serves.

One focus is a grant-based program through Feeding America that focuses on specific minority populations who are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We will focus on making sure we are addressing the needs of these communities and come up with solutions to help with food security,” Sampson said.

The community-led effort includes steering teams in three of the Food Bank’s service areas to evaluate possible modifications, which might include adjusting distribution times or vouchers for ethnic grocery stores.

“We want to know what we can change and make sure people are safe and welcome at our distributions,” Sampson said. “Our mission is to alleviate hunger; and if we know we’re not reaching certain populations, we have a responsibility to think differently and act on that.”

No matter the changes coming, the Food Bank is working to ensure it is there to help.

For more information on the Food Bank or to donate, visit www.LincolnFoodBank.org. 



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Lincoln City Libraries' Services for Seniors

By Wyatt Packard, Library Service Associate at the Gere Branch Library

Many things in our lives have changed as a result of COVID-19, and the need for books, media, technology and family has never been more important. As a result, Lincoln City Libraries (LCL) is excited to team up with Aging Partners to offer new educational programs and services for the entire community.

If you have any questions, library staff is available at 402-441-8560. We look forward to hearing from you!

Family Folklore: A Writing Project for Seniors

With more time being spent inside, now is an excellent chance to jot down some of your favorite memories.

The Family Folklore city writing project encourages seniors to write about their lives in Nebraska, with an opportunity to contribute their stories for preservation.

Seniors are invited to write up to three pages (approximately 1,500 words) about a favorite or impactful personal history memory. Submissions may be handwritten, typed or emailed. Copies of photos also may be included. These writings can be mailed to the Gere Branch Library, 2400 S. 56th St., Lincoln, NE 68506; dropped off at any branch library; or emailed to heritage@lincolnlibraries.org. Submissions will be stored in the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors



Library Service Associates Wyatt Packard and Melanie Newell are ready to help with a Technology Time appointment.

at the Bennett Martin Public Library. A reception for contributors will be announced at a later date.

All submissions should include a separate page with your name, address, and an email or phone number. By submitting, you agree that Lincoln City Libraries and Aging Partners may make your writing available to the public and use portions or the entirety of your submission for future library programs, promotions, and/or publications.

Items should be submitted to Lincoln City Libraries by March 31.

Questions to ask to get started may include:

- When and where were you born?
- What did a typical day look like growing up?
- What was your first job? What was your favorite job?

- What is your favorite family story?
- Are there any stories that have been passed down through the generations?
- Who inspired you most in your life?
- What advice would you give your younger self? What about to future generations?
- Write about your grandparents. What would you want people to know?
- What is a favorite family recipe? Why is it special? Include the recipe.
- If there was a museum about your life, what objects would you include? Why?

Read to Me Book Bundles

Staying connected to family is essential as it's difficult when you can't see the young ones in your life. To help foster those connections, LCL is offering Read to Me book bundles so you can read to your family via video chat.

Please call 402-441-8560 to request bundles. It's helpful to know:

- Your library card number, if available.
- The age of the child or children you plan on reading to.
- Topics of interest (dinosaurs, princesses, sports, etc.).



Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors

Each bundle will include three to five books and a “Get Started with Video Chat” instruction sheet so you can have the perfect reading time even when you can’t be together in person.

Technology Time

Would you like help with a tablet, computer, smartphone or e-reader? Want to set up video chatting or get e-books and audiobooks from your library, but you aren’t sure where to start? Library staff is here to help you with your technology questions in this time of social distancing.

You may request a 30-minute appointment by phone with a knowledgeable library staff member to help you with your technology questions.

To request an appointment time, please call 402-441-8560.

If possible, please have your technology in front of you during

your appointment so the library staff can talk through the process with you. We also encourage you to have a notebook and pen or pencil handy to write down notes or questions before, after or during your appointment.


Libraries are Open

LCL would like to remind customers that service options are available for at-risk individuals and their caretakers.

- On Fridays, the 10-11 a.m. hour is intended for those who are at-risk and especially vulnerable to illness. In addition to masks and social distancing, additional safety measures are employed such as staff temperature checks.
- Face coverings are required in library buildings.
- Visits are limited to one hour with building capacity controls in place.
- Materials may be reserved online and

quickly picked up at the front. For assistance with online reservations, please call your branch library.

- Libraries can provide your favorite library materials directly to your home at no cost through Home Outreach by Mail for those who are homebound. For patrons who are unable to leave their home due to a temporary or permanent disability, call 402-441-8537 or email home@lincolnlibraries.org. You also can visit lincolnlibraries.org/about/home-outreach-by-mail for information and qualifications.

Due to COVID-19, library services and hours are subject to change. LCL offers online service 24 hours a day including downloadable e-books and audiobooks, as well as business, consumer and employment resources. To access these and other resources, visit lincolnlibraries.org. 

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Planning Ahead

The Basics of Estate Planning

You've worked hard to earn the things you own. As you begin to look forward, it's important to ensure your property will go to whom and where you want it. Having a will or a trust is the best way to ensure your property and family are taken care of in an unfortunate event.

"If you die without a will, the government doesn't take your property, but it does decide what to do with it," said Attorney Andrew Loudon with Ball, Loudon, Ebert & Brostrom LLC.

While you might think a surviving spouse would receive it in entirety, the government often designates half to the spouse and half to the children.

While that isn't what most people want, it's important to work with an estate planner to determine the best choices for your situation and ensure your estate goes where you want.

Will vs. Trust

A will is a written legal document stating how you want your assets distributed after you die. An executor, named in the will, oversees this process.

A living trust, also called a revocable trust, is a legal document in which your assets are placed into a trust for your benefit during your lifetime and transferred to designated beneficiaries at your death by your chosen representative.

While a will is simple and fairly inexpensive, it does have its negatives, including probate, the legal process of administering a person's estate after their death. The will must be submitted to a court judge to have the executor of the will appointed. Because of the legal process, other downfalls

include attorney's fees and a time delay in transferring of assets.

"The pandemic made the time delay a real issue," Loudon said. "The court was closed for two months, and this caused a problem for families who had someone die before it started and couldn't get someone appointed until months later and things needed to be done."

Probate also is a matter of public record and will list what you owned during your lifetime.

Having a trust drafted will likely cost more up front and may take longer, as it's a more complex legal document. Assets such as bank accounts, stocks, etc., must be transferred into the trust.

A trust can save your estate and loved ones money and time by avoiding probate and can provide privacy.

"Many private individuals use trusts because no one will know what you owned during your lifetime," Loudon said. "A trust also gets assets quickly to their children."

Things to Consider

Loudon recommends everyone with a child have a will and update a will or create a trust when children are grown and out of college, and when you're nearing retirement, healthy and not under stress. It's better to create a trust before you retire to make it easier to make changes in retirement accounts when you retire.

Decisions for these documents should not be taken lightly. A difficult decision is who to designate to handle your affairs after a person's death. In



Attorney Andrew Loudon with Ball, Loudon, Ebert & Brostrom LLC

Nebraska, the executor of the will is called the personal representative; and a trustee is the person in charge of the trust.

"Naming a personal representative and trustee is the most important decision people make," he said. "You can have the best looking, well-written trust or will but if you name the wrong person, it's not going to go well."

There are three options: name your children in a particular order, name your children together as co-representatives, or name a third party.

Many may find it difficult to choose one child over another, but naming all the children together could cause issues if there is a disagreement, leading to court.

"You shouldn't just choose the oldest child," Loudon said. "You want to choose someone who's not a procrastinator, is organized and can balance their own checkbook. You

also want someone nearby because it's difficult to settle an estate from far away."

In many cases, naming an independent third party is beneficial. Many places, such as banks, have professionals who settle estates for a living. They do charge for their services, but usually only a one-time charge after death. Naming a third party can remove the burden from children such as filing the last income tax return, making sure the inheritance tax is done correctly and paying bills. If an individual doesn't have children, it would be ideal to name a third party as a trustee/ personal representative.

Taxes

Proper estate planning can help lessen the burden of estate taxes and the Nebraska inheritance tax.

Until 2025, every American can pass along \$11.4 million of property

without any federal estate tax, and a married couple can pass along \$22.3 million with proper filings. In 2026, that will return to \$5 million and \$10 million for couples, adjusted for inflation.

"While most of us will fall below the \$10 million in assets, farmers in Nebraska may not," Loudon said.

However, the tax that does impact every Nebraska resident is the inheritance tax. Since 1901, the tax is based on how the recipient is related to the individual who died. Spouses and charities pay a zero percent tax on assets received; children each receive a \$40,000 exemption and pay at a 1 percent rate; nieces and nephews a \$15,000 exemption and 13 percent tax rate; and non-relatives face a \$10,000 exemption and 18 percent tax rate.

The inheritance tax is collected at the county level, and is taxed where the property is located.

Finding an Estate Planning Attorney

While many may consider creating a will online, the value in an attorney is the advice they can provide and potential situations to consider for your specific situation.

Estate law is a specialized area of law, and it is important to find an attorney you trust. A good place to ask for referrals is through a financial advisor, accountant or banker.

"Ask people who invest money for you, do income tax work or help with banking," Loudon said. "They tend to know the attorneys who specialize in estate planning."

It's also important to ask how much they charge, so you aren't surprised. Remember, the cost of using an estate planning attorney will result in cost savings of thousands of dollars in the long run and ease the burden of your loved ones when you pass away. **lw**

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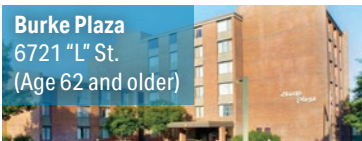
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Giving Your Loved Ones Your Voice Through Your Wishes

An unfortunate medical event can leave you or your grieving loved ones with the responsibility of making end-of-life decisions.

That's why Erin Putney, a registered nurse and Practical Nursing instructor at Southeast Community College, wants to help you and your family prepare for these tough talks.

As she's worked eight of her 14 years in a trauma intensive care unit (ICU), Putney has seen numerous families struggle to make decisions without knowing their loved one's wishes.

To stave off these stressful situations, Putney teaches a workshop educating health care providers to facilitate end-of-life conversations. Putney's ultimate goal is to encourage families to have these conversations before the need arises.

"There's a gap in our culture, society and the health care field, and it revolves around death," she said. "We have to stop being afraid of talking about death because it causes a lot of burden for families and health care workers."

Facing the Truth

It can be difficult to make rational, unemotional decisions when you're faced with an emergency situation. Not knowing your loved one's wishes also can lead to a sense of guilt along with the trauma and grief you're already facing.

"I've seen a lot of people in the ICU who haven't had those conversations and are guessing what their loved one would want while grieving," Putney said.

Since you can't guarantee where or when you or your loved ones will die, Putney encourages families

to talk about more than funeral arrangements. You also should talk about your desires for resuscitation or being sustained by breathing or feeding tubes. Even if you don't know the terms or have health care knowledge, you can share your priorities. How do you define living? How would your life be if you couldn't do the things you love?

"You have to figure out what people's priorities are," Putney said. "If an individual is resistant, ask them what they love to do and what fills their life. What makes life worth living?"

For instance, some individuals don't want to be placed on a ventilator if they can't participate in their children's lives.

There's no right time to talk about this topic, but you should do it sooner rather than later. Listen to the clues from a loved one; discuss it when writing a power of attorney or living will; or talk about it when a friend, relative or celebrity dies. Ask how they would want their situation handled and what they want their end-of-life care to look like, including use of life support equipment.

Finding the Courage

If your loved one avoids the conversation, discuss their bucket list or things they still want to experience and achieve during their lifetime. Ask them how they would feel if they couldn't do these things.

Putney encourages everyone, no matter the age, to let his or her health care preferences be known. She has done this with her teenage sons, which has provided her with peace of mind.

"The gift of your words will help,"

Putney said. "It may not help the hurt or grief, but the guilt of guessing won't be there because they know what you wanted."

Having the conversation now can help relieve some suffering later. And especially with the pandemic, it's important to initiate the conversation soon.

"It's been hard with COVID-19, especially when families can't visit in person; they're left making decisions over the phone or via video chat when their loved one can't talk for themselves," Putney said. "When you let others know what you want, you've empowered them to be your voice and express the choices you wanted — to let them speak for you when you aren't able to speak for yourself."

It's uncomfortable to talk about death and dying, and that's OK. But it's a topic that needs to be discussed.

"I think we don't have these conversations enough," Putney said. "I've seen the pain it causes in the ICU — the guessing and not knowing what mom or dad wanted. But I've also seen the peace when a child knows what a parent wanted."

When others have to be your voice, the best thing you can do is communicate your choices.

"Someday someone might sit in the chair next to you and have to be the one to say the words, and if they're guessing what those words are, there is increased trauma in the grieving process," Putney said. "But if they know what you want, they may leave without you, but they will know they did the right thing."

For more about Teaching Courage, visit teachingcourage.com. 

Zoom Into Fitness Classes From the Comfort of Your Own Home

While people make adjustments to COVID-19 and any related restrictions, Aging Partners has taken steps to ensure seniors can continue focusing on their health and well-being.

Community Health Educator Tracie Foreman and Ann Heydt, Health and Fitness program assistant, have been conducting some of participants' favorite Aging Partners fitness classes virtually via Zoom.

While the online experience cannot fully compare to in-person group classes, there are some advantages, Foreman said.

"The idea of participants not having to leave their homes or get out of their pajamas if they don't want to is something that is catching on," she said.

Attendance via Zoom has been averaging between 10 to 20 per class. This online option becomes even more enticing to some during colder winter months when getting outside isn't as viable for some, Foreman said.

Classes offered via Zoom from the converted community room at the fitness center include Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance, Qigong: Refresh and Recharge, Dance for Life and a new class called Movement and Strength with Fun in Between hosted by fitness instructor Mitzi Aden.

"We're focusing on some of our most popular classes," Foreman said.

She adds that these Zoom classes open up 15 minutes before and after the scheduled class time to allow for socialization, sharing and questions from students.

Now more than ever with health concerns abounding, Foreman notes the valuable purpose of these fitness classes.

"We say you've got to build your strength and immunity by eating healthy and exercising, so we don't want to take away that exercise component," she said.

There is a suggested contribution of \$4 for those age 60 and over and family caregivers of any age or a \$5 fee for those under the age of 60 for classes meeting one time per week.

Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance classes are offered twice per week. Fees are \$2 per class or \$4 per week for those over 60 or family caregivers and \$5 per week for those under the age of 60. Preregistration is required



Ann Heydt, Health and Fitness program assistant, instructs Zoom participants on tai chi.



Community Health Educator Tracie Foreman conducts a qigong class over Zoom for older adults.

by calling 402-441-7575. Class fees or contributions can be mailed to The Health and Fitness office at 555 S. 9th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. **lw**

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How Speech Therapy Can Benefit Communication, Safety

Being able to speak and communicate is an integral part of human interaction. During the aging process, however, our ability to communicate may change over time. In addition, the muscles of the larynx can lose flexibility and elasticity, making older adults more susceptible to voice and swallowing disorders.

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) can assess, diagnose, treat and manage disorders related to swallowing, voice, communication, language and cognition — including memory, attention and problem-solving. Specific exercises can support an individual to regain function and communicate effectively again.

Some diseases and disorders are more common in the older population and can be treated or improved with speech therapy. This includes individuals who are impacted by stroke, traumatic brain injuries, concussion, chronic disease, cancer or a progressive neurological disease such as Parkinson's Disease. There are many changes related to the aging process that could benefit from speech therapy, whether this is to promote



Kirsten Madson, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals speech-language pathologist, works with a patient.

improvement or slow the rate of progression.

“We might be able to help with anything that impacts speech, language, voice, cognitive and swallowing functions,” said Kirsten Madson, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals speech-language pathologist.

For those with a dementia diagnosis, speech therapy can assist family members to provide communication support while caring for their loved one as meaningfully as possible.

Is Speech Therapy Right for Me?

During aging, normal changes can occur with speech, language, memory, voice and swallowing. Individuals should note any changes in their condition and speak to their primary care physician.

Many individuals who benefit from speech therapy are those who face increased difficulty in chewing or swallowing. These individuals may have a feeling of food stuck in the throat, cough while eating or drinking, feel as though food is going “down the wrong tube,” or are facing frequent bouts of pneumonia.

Individuals facing cognitive concerns, thinking or processing skills, could also benefit from speech therapy. Changes to note could include difficulty remembering important conversations, trouble keeping up with schedules, forgetting medication and appointments, or struggling to understand or speak.

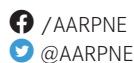
“A slight change in memory is normal as we age; but if you find it’s negatively impacting daily functioning, it might be beneficial to get a speech therapy evaluation,” Madson said.

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Someone could benefit from therapy if they notice changes in their vocal abilities as friends and family ask them to repeat themselves, saying they can't hear you. It's possible your voice becomes more hoarse, strained or lost throughout the day, Madson said.

"A lot of times your friends and family might notice these changes before you do," Madson said.

How Speech Therapy Can Help

If you notice any of these changes, begin by discussing concerns with your physician. They can help determine if a referral to a speech-language pathologist might be beneficial.

First, an evaluation is completed to assess your abilities. These assessments can serve as a baseline or could serve as a comparison of function to the rest of the population based on age. An assessment will include an interview to see what challenges each person is facing and how those challenges impact everyday living.

"We look at an individual's home life, community and vocational roles, the challenges they're facing, impacts to daily living and determine an individualized treatment plan," Madson said.

Treatment for cognitive issues might include working on attention, memory or problem-solving and relating those to everyday life situations.

A large part of speech therapy is developing compensatory strategies for organization or memory to manage the individual's home, social, community and vocational tasks.

"We always try to restore function, but we simultaneously work to make individuals as independent and successful as possible in all cases," Madson said. "In many cases, having compensations in place can help people do that."

For swallowing issues, speech therapy may include diet recommendations for ease and safety, as well as exercise programs to work on strength and coordination of swallowing.

Speech therapy for voice irregularities may include exercises to improve function of respiratory support, vocal flexibility and voice endurance.

Speech-language changes may occur for any number of reasons, but it is vital for seniors' overall health and ability to communicate. A speech-language pathologist can assist in differentiating between normal aging and disordered communication or swallowing function.

"If speech therapy isn't the solution, we can potentially recommend a referral to an appropriate specialist to get the help you need," Madson said.

A speech therapist may recognize the need for additional specialists, such as occupational or physical therapists; ear, nose and throat doctor, or other medical professional.

Taking steps to improve a senior's ability to swallow, think, and communicate can increase safety, independence, health and overall quality of life. **lw**

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Weighing the Options: Surgery, Physical Therapy or Both

Orthopedic procedures are a personal decision. Weighing your threshold of aches and pains against surgery and recovery time can be difficult.

Staying fit and healthy is important as we age, but if a joint is keeping you from doing the things you want, you might be considering the options.

“If you want to do something active but you can’t because of dysfunction or pain holding you back, it might be time to consider physical therapy or surgery,” said Physical Therapist John Linn, Lincoln Orthopedic Physical Therapy.

While surgery is a great option in many circumstances, it shouldn’t be

taken as the first and only option.

“Surgery might seem like a quick and easy fix, but sometimes with the length of time to recover, it might be better to do other things before you consider that route,” Linn said.

Orthopedic physical therapy may help as it works with your musculoskeletal and neurological systems with the goal of restoring movement, function and quality of life.

“We look for imbalances such as tightness in one area and weaknesses in another,” Linn said. “We correct those imbalances through stretching, strengthening and other things, making sure everything is working properly together.”



Physical Therapist John Linn, Lincoln Orthopedic Physical Therapy

Physical therapy works to increase flexibility and muscle strength in weakened areas, reducing the stress on joints, which can help avoid further injury and in some cases avoid or postpone a surgery.



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Anyone in Nebraska can go directly to a physical therapist to access care without a referral from another doctor, although many may consider contacting their primary care physician first to discuss the best course of action.

Physical therapy prior to a surgery can help relieve pain, increase stamina, reduce complications of surgery, restore range of motion, and shorten the hospital stay and recovery time. Many times insurance will require physical therapy prior to a potential surgery.

“Even if a patient has talked to a surgeon but isn’t ready to commit to surgery, physical therapy can help work on flexibility and strengthening to fend off surgery for a while, and maybe even help avoid it all together,” Linn said.

Physical therapists work with patients to determine the best way to feel and function better based on an individual’s circumstances.

“I often tell patients, if you aren’t feeling positive improvement within three weeks, we should think about going back to your physician,” Linn said.

If you have questions on whether physical therapy may be right for you, contact your physical therapist and ask them how they may help you. 

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Oral Hygiene Key to Overall Health

Times are changing in terms of dental health, and as we age, our mouths change, too.

More than 30 percent of older adults wear dentures, but this is not necessarily a consequence of aging.

“Years ago, if someone was over the age of 65, there was a 75 percent chance they wore dentures,” said Ernie Sigler, D.D.S., retired assistant professor adult restorative dentistry at UNL College of Dentistry. “But since people are living longer now, the number of patients 65 and over has increased dramatically and will continue to do so. It is estimated that in 30 years the number of people 65 and over will be nearly 84 million. People are living longer, and they also are keeping their teeth longer. This is great, but it creates other challenges.”

Protecting Your Health

Paying attention to oral health benefits more than a just a beautiful smile. It can possibly improve health.

Research has shown a possible connection between gum disease and other systemic conditions. Maintaining good oral hygiene is a weapon against heart disease, strokes, and diabetes. Recent research showed a possible link between a specific oral bacteria and pancreatic cancer.

Going to the dentist also can allow a insight into your health. The mouth can serve as a window to the rest of your body and can aid in detecting early signs and symptoms of systemic disease, affecting the rest of your body. According to the Academy of General Dentistry, more than 90 percent of all systemic diseases produce oral signs and symptoms.

Changing Mouth

As people age, the mouth changes and the nerves in teeth become constricted, making them



Ernie Sigler, D.D.S., retired assistant professor adult restorative dentistry at UNL College of Dentistry

less sensitive to cavities and other tooth problems. It is important to visit a dentist regularly because as sensitivity is lost one may not realize that teeth are decayed, abscessed or damaged.

Living longer brings more physical changes, and often older adults need to take medications for high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, dementia, depression or other conditions.

“Most of these medications have side effects such as decreased saliva, which can cause dry mouth,” Sigler said. “Our saliva is our mouth’s most precious resource, and provides us with a lot of natural immunity and protection. It plays an important role in our speaking and swallowing, aids digestion, and protects our teeth from decay.”

More than 400 medications can cause dry mouth, along with radiation or chemotherapy. Dry mouth increases the risk for cavities, difficulty in speaking and can cause soft tissues, gums, palate and cheeks to become sensitive.

To combat dry mouth, Sigler suggests keeping hydrated and visiting a dentist often.

“The best treatment for decay resulting from dry mouth is a prescription for an extra-strength fluoride toothpaste, which is five times stronger than regular toothpaste,” he said. “This will reduce the chance of decay if used properly and regularly.”

Research has shown that xylitol reduces bacteria and decreases the incidence of tooth decay. Chewing between six and eight pieces of xylitol gum per day can be beneficial.

As we get older, our gums usually recede and we find much more decay on the root surfaces of our teeth. In addition, the aging population often has decreased dexterity, or physical limitations, which make flossing difficult. This creates difficulty for the dentist to restore teeth and makes it harder for the patient to clean these areas. In these situations, the patient could consider different aides, one being a Proxabrush. This device, which can be found at drugstores, is

a tree-like brush on a handle and makes it easier for the patient or caregiver to clean between teeth. For those with arthritis or another condition, using a battery-operated toothbrush or one with a larger handle may be needed.

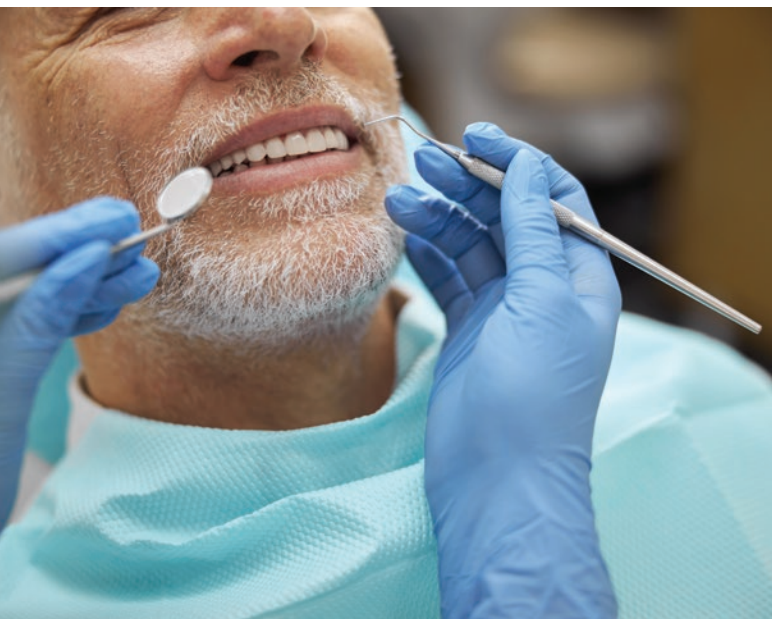
In addition to extra-strength fluoride toothpaste, in some situations patients may need to place fluoride gel into trays similar to bleaching trays. These trays are placed in the mouth for five minutes once per day. This is for patients that have severe xerostomia due to radiation and/or chemotherapy, or any patient with a high caries index and does not have the manual dexterity to adequately brush. As in the high-fluoridated toothpaste, the fluoride gel must have a prescription. Also, a hygienist can apply fluoride varnish to the teeth at each dental visit, which has a high concentration of fluoride and has been proven to be effective.

“Taking care of your teeth makes you feel better about yourself,” Sigler said. “It is important to keep coming back, especially if you take a lot of medications, have had radiation or chemotherapy treatment, or have a history of decay.”

Even with dentures, it is important to visit a dentist regularly. A dentist will check fit, bite, and soft tissue pathology including oral cancer.

Nutrition

Sigler also suggests eating a balanced diet and limiting the amount of sugar intake. Drinks like orange juice have a lot of sugar. While diet soda lacks sugar, it is acidic and can quickly wear away enamel. If a person frequently eats sweets, try to brush teeth as soon as possible after eating. Replace regular candies with sugarless hard candy or gum.



We treat everyone like our own family. We don't try to sell them expensive treatments, and we treat them with kindness and gentleness. Patients are our biggest source of referrals.”


– Dr. Ernie Sigler, D.D.S.

“Don't put off coming to the dentist,” Sigler said. “Whether or not our aging patients admit it, everyone wants to look better and have a prettier smile.”

During your appointment, make sure to mention any symptoms or changes of taste you have experienced as well as medications you are taking.

Visiting a Dentist

For those without a regular dentist or seeking a lower-cost visit, UNL may be the place to go. The cost of the appointment is often lower, but appointment times will be longer. Call 402-472-1301 to make an appointment.

“We treat everyone like our own family,” Sigler said. “We don't try to sell them expensive treatments, and we treat them with kindness and gentleness. Patients are our biggest source of referrals.” 



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What Fiber in Your Diet Can Do for You

Have you ever heard people talk about “staying regular” and making sure you “get enough fiber?” It may be a topic that isn’t brought up too often, but it’s one that’s extremely important for everyone, especially older adults. Let’s look into the ever-evolving world of fiber and what it can do for you.

Types of Fiber

Dietary fiber is defined by the Mayo Clinic as roughage or bulk. It’s a plant-based carbohydrate that your body can’t break down. Instead, it passes through your digestive tract intact. Fiber typically is classified as either soluble or insoluble — each with its own set of health benefits, sources where they’re found and effects on the body.

Soluble vs. Insoluble Fiber and Their Respective Health Benefits

Soluble fiber dissolves in water and forms a gel-like mixture as a result. This specific form of fiber has a host of health benefits including lowering LDL (low-density lipoprotein) or “bad” cholesterol and improving (lowering) glucose levels. As LDL cholesterol is lowered, it also reduces your risk of heart disease. Lower cholesterol levels also mean a happier, healthier and more improved heart.

Insoluble fiber, in contrast, does not dissolve in water and remains intact as it travels through the digestive tract. However, it still possesses many health benefits. Insoluble fiber helps keep our bodies regulated and performing their best. Older adults and people of all ages who suffer from constipation, non-intact or incomplete stools, sometimes need help to get things moving. This is where insoluble fiber comes in.

Sources for Both Types of Fiber

There are various food sources in which soluble and insoluble fiber can be found. Soluble fiber can be found in foods such as oats (oatmeal), nuts, beans, apples and citrus fruits. Insoluble fiber can be found in whole wheat flour, nuts, beans, wheat bran, certain vegetables, potatoes and certain vegetables (e.g., cauliflower and green beans).

How Much We Need and How to Include More in Our Diet

The daily fiber intake recommendation ranges from 25 to 35 grams per day. However, research suggests that the average American only consumes half that amount. Mayo Clinic recommends that men age 51 and over consume 30 grams of fiber per day while women of the same age consume 21 grams per day. These daily intake recommendations suggest that the daily fiber intake comes directly from fiber-packed foods rather than fiber-packed supplements. Eating food is always more nutritious and beneficial.

Trying to get more fiber in our daily diets helps us as we strive to achieve our optimal health and well-being.

However, adding too much fiber too soon can have negative effects on your digestive tract. If you’re



looking to add more fiber to your diet, look no further than adding whole grains such as bread, rice, pasta and bagels. You can even add more fruits, vegetables, beans and nuts, which all can increase fiber intake.

Here are some good tips to consider when expanding your diet to include more fiber:

- Read the Nutrition Facts label and make sure “whole grain” is listed in the first few ingredients.
- Look for foods that have 5 grams or more of fiber per serving or 20 percent of the daily value.
- When we increase fiber, we also need to make sure our water intake is sufficient. Aim to drink at least 64 ounces of water per day.

Do You Know Your Fiber?

Now that you’re an expert on fiber, take the quiz below to test your knowledge! Hint: use the information found in this article to answer the questions below.

1. _____ fiber typically passes right through our digestive tract whole.
2. _____ grams of fiber per day are needed for women age 51 and over.
3. This type of _____ fiber turns into a gel-like substance and can help lower cholesterol.
4. Men age 51 and over need _____ grams of fiber per day.
5. When we increase our fiber intake we should aim to drink at least _____ ounces of water per day. **LW**

Charles Senior Housing



Welcome to Charles Senior Housing – a beautiful apartment community in the heart of Lincoln.

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(402) 327-6300 | southlakevillagerehab.com

#loveinannursinghome #keepingourseniorsafe

Living At Home

Staying Self-Sufficient

By Mitch Sump, Aging Partners program coordinator

Happy New Year! I hope the holidays were good and everyone is staying warm and safe.

As always, we start with a weather report at the time of writing as it's a beautiful November day with temperatures in the 70s. Another fishing season is almost over; and once again, Mr. Twenty Pound Channel Cat has managed to avoid me!

Lifeline

If you are a subscriber to our Lifeline Emergency Response System (ERS) program, you have probably met or at least spoken to Suzanne Frazier. Suzanne has been the face of this program for a number of years; but last month, she decided to call it a career and retire. I personally thank Suzanne for her years of dedication to Lifeline and the hundreds of clients who she helped stay safe and in their homes. In addition, she made me look good as a team leader; and that is no small task! Next issue I will introduce our new Lifeline ERS coordinator; but if you are in the market for an ERS, please reach out to us at 402-441-8816 or 402-441-8815. We have a system that fits your needs and budget.

Handyman

I assume that our Handymen and Handywomen who are doing snow removal have probably been out a few times by now. We are always looking for more folks willing to do snow removal. Our waiting list is pretty long; so if you are shoveling your own walks/driveways and want to help out other seniors, give us a call at 402-441-7030 for an application. We will also happily accept applications from non-seniors!

Handyman is doing limited work on the inside of homes. I stress the word "limited" because only a few of our Handymen and Handywomen currently are accepting inside work orders. We are categorizing the work orders by need, so please also keep this in mind if you need something done. For example, if your toilet is not working, that's probably going to be a job we will try to prioritize. We wish we could help everyone but, unfortunately, our team needs a few more members at the moment.

Durable Medical Equipment

We have had several contributions come into the Durable Medical Equipment program the past few weeks. If you need a walker, bath chair or similar item, please reach out to us at 402-441-3025. If your New Year's resolution is to declutter your house of things you no longer use or need, feel free to call us regarding any medical equipment you want to donate.



Transportation

As I write, the senior center transit buses are still just delivering food; but hopefully we are back in the business of transporting people to and from the centers soon. Aging Partners has five senior centers in Lincoln, and we provide transportation to all of them. If you are interested in riding, please call 402-441-7863 to determine which center is in your area and to schedule a ride.

When the senior centers eventually reopen, grocery routes will commence and we're considering adopting some special routes that may be of interest to you. Stay tuned.


Lancaster County Public Rural Transit is still running and, if you miss seeing old friends who live in the county but outside of the Lincoln city limits, call 402-441-7031 to determine if our service could work for you. We are working to be as safe as possible, so masks are required and seating is limited, but we would love to have you give us a try. And please note this is public transportation so anyone can ride, but we require that one of your stops or boarding occurs outside the Lincoln city limits. For transportation within Lincoln, please use StarTran or their Handi-Van service for your travel needs.

Winter Home Checklist

This will help you get ready for spring:

- Tune up the lawnmower so it's ready when the grass starts growing. January is an ideal time to get this done since the small engine shops aren't as busy as they will be in a couple of months. Changing the oil, filter and spark plugs will make sure your mower is ready and roaring to go come mowing season. Hint: If you can, get one or two extra blades for your mower and change the blade after every few uses.

- Schedule your seasonal lawn service. Now is the time when many lawn services are setting up their upcoming season, so call them and get on the schedule!
- Clear out old lawn chemicals by calling Safe Homes for Seniors, a joint project between the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and Aging Partners. It helps residents remove potentially dangerous chemicals from their homes. The best part of the program is that it's free!

Well as usual, my editor is counting words and glaring at me, so I better wrap this up. If you can use any or all of our programs, please give us a call. 



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one free day of service after your first month.

Reduce Kitchen Fires, Protect Yourself and Family

Kitchen fires present obvious danger, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency reports individuals age 65 and over have a 2.5 times greater risk of dying in a kitchen fire than the general population. In 2019, an estimated 3,503 seniors age 65 and over in the U.S. went to the hospital for cooking-related burns. Of those, seniors ages 65 to 69 accounted for 44 percent of these emergency room visits.

Cooking amounts to the leading cause of home fires and fire-related injuries, and the primary cause of fires in the kitchen are unattended cooking.

Additionally, it was estimated in 2019 that a little more than 4 million grandparents age 60 and over live with their grandchildren. Of those, about one in four grandparents are responsible for their grandchildren's care. Therefore, it is important to note that fires and burns are also a leading cause of injury for children.

Knowing fire risks in the home and addressing them can help keep everyone safe.

Stay Attentive

Stay near the heat source when cooking. Although many have the tendency to put something in the oven, stove or grill and step away, individuals should remain near the kitchen if a pot boils over or something catches fire.

"When you are cooking, you should be in the kitchen, and that should be the only thing you are doing," said Jason Relford,

Bureau of Fire Prevention fire inspector. "Many of the fires we see are because people are cooking and doing something else. The other thing takes their attention away and gives fire an opportunity to start; and by the time they realize it, it's grown beyond their control."

Stay in the kitchen when you are boiling, grilling or broiling food. If you are simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly and stay in the home. Use a timer to remind yourself about the food cooking and periodically check your timer to ensure it's working.

Another way to remind yourself that you have food cooking is to turn on your stove or oven light when you turn the burner or oven on. That way, once you turn the heat source off, you can turn the light off, too, before leaving the kitchen.

Grease Fires

The most common types of kitchen fires revolve around food products that release grease-laden vapors.

"When stoves and ovens are not cleaned properly, the grease from things like ground beef or bacon has a low flash point," he said. "When the grease hits the heating element, it can start a fire."

Grease can catch fire quickly, so it's important to clean your stove and oven often according to manufacturer recommendations.

Grease fires also can start when too much cooking oil is used, or when the oil gets too hot. Grease fires are made worse by application of water or other unapproved extinguishment methods such as baking soda, flour and salt. Grease fires can be stopped by cutting off oxygen supply to the pan or oven. Put a lid on top of a pan or keep the oven door closed and turn off the heat source before evacuating the home and calling 911.

Keep the Stove Clear

Keep your stove area clean and tidy. Removing items such as plastic utensils, packaging, cookbooks, dishtowels and



decorations away from the stove, can help avoid a potential fire.

“Even a greasy plastic or wooden spoon can get hot enough to ignite,” Relford said.

Also remember to avoid wearing loose-fitting or other types of clothing that can hang down onto stove burners and catch fire.

Fire Extinguisher

Relford recommends having a standard small ABC fire extinguisher in your home to help with small fires or keep things under control until the fire department arrives.

“The fire extinguisher should be easily accessible, and everyone in the house should know where it is and how to use it,” he said.

Fire extinguishers can be purchased at most home improvement or big-box stores.

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms detect and alert people to the early stages of a fire. Having properly working smoke alarms can be the difference in a life or death situation with a fire.

Be sure your home has smoke alarms installed in every sleeping room, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Test your smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button and switch out the batteries regularly. Make sure everyone in your home understands the smoke alarm and how to respond.

If you have young children in your home, be sure to make a fire escape plan and practice it. Designate two ways to get out of each room, making sure someone will help children, older adults and people with disabilities to wake up and get out. Teach children how to get out on their own if you cannot help. Establish a meeting place away from the home to meet after exiting.

Practice what to do if there is smoke. Get low, and get out fast. Practice using different ways out



and closing doors behind you as you leave. Never go back in for people, pets or things. Go to your designated meeting place and call 911.

Fire and Kids

In 2017, there were 268 children in the U.S. who died in home fires that included the child’s residence, home child care provider, and grandparents’ or other relatives’ residence.

“The best prevention is providing responsible adult supervision,” said Brian Baker, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Injury Prevention Program and Safe Kids coordinator.

Kids are quick and should be kept at least 3 feet away from cooking sources inside or outside. Make sure to turn pot handles toward the back of the stove and keep yourself from being distracted.

“It is critically important that grandparents providing child care for grandchildren are knowledgeable of common injury risks to children in and around the home environment,” Baker said.

For a child home safety resources and home safety checklist, visit SafeKidsLincoln.org. 



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Caregiver Corner

Nebraska Caregiver Coalition Serves as Advocate

At any given time, 219,000 Nebraskans are serving as caregivers for a friend or family member who has a health problem, long-term illness or disability. Being a caregiver is a rewarding and life-changing experience, but it can be isolating and stressful too. The Nebraska Caregiver Coalition wants caregivers to know they're not alone.

The Nebraska Caregiver Coalition was formed in 2013 to raise awareness and support for caregivers. Members work to advocate for caregiver issues and relief, along with raising public awareness and working with legislature.

"We recognize caregivers have a big responsibility and are taking care of a loved one at home," said Bob Lassen, Coalition member. "The Coalition's goal is to keep people at home as long as they can, and we want to help those who make that possible."

The Coalition provides a unified approach to bring senior care agencies together for a monthly meeting to discuss what's happening in their caretaking arena.

"We have people from various spectrums of the industry who work with caregivers in one form or another," Lassen said. "We talk about things that we see happening, legislation and areas that can potentially help caregivers such as education."

The Nebraska Caregiver Coalition also provides prepare to care classes for family members who are taking on the role of caregiver.

"We want to help caregivers understand that the steps they're going through are not new, and how they can plan and organize it to make the process easier," Lassen said.

The prepare to care class can be given to groups and organizations at no cost.

"It gives caregivers a chance to see they're not alone in this journey," Lassen said. "A lot of people do this, and there are a lot of agencies out there to help."

Making an Impact

One result of the Nebraska Caregiver Coalition's advocacy work with other agencies is the Aging

and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The ADRC is a free, one-stop resource that provides referrals and options counseling, identifies unmet service needs, and recommends community resources for Nebraskans with disabilities, adults age 60 and over, their caregivers and advocates.

Finding available resources can help relieve some of the burden from caregivers. The ADRC can be reached at 402-441-7070 and can help direct a caller to an organization providing care, support groups and other services.

"There are a lot of support groups out there that cater to a specific diagnosis," Lassen said. "Every caregiver should get involved in a group if they can. It's a great way to avoid feeling isolated on your caregiving journey and share what you're going through."



Looking for a rewarding experience like no other?

Become a Classroom Foster Grandparent - Virtually!

What is a Foster Grandparent?

Foster Grandparents are volunteers who assist in baby, toddler, and preschool classrooms at Community Action's Head Start Centers. **At present, Foster Grandparents are connecting virtually with classrooms!** Foster Grandparents get a **financial stipend, paid holidays and time off**, and all the **supplies and training** needed to support the needs of enrolled children virtually.

Am I Eligible?

Individuals must be 55 or older, have a love for children, and be able to serve weekly. Income eligibility also applies.

How Do I Get Started?

Contact Georgann Roth at (402) 875-9320.




The Future of Caregiving

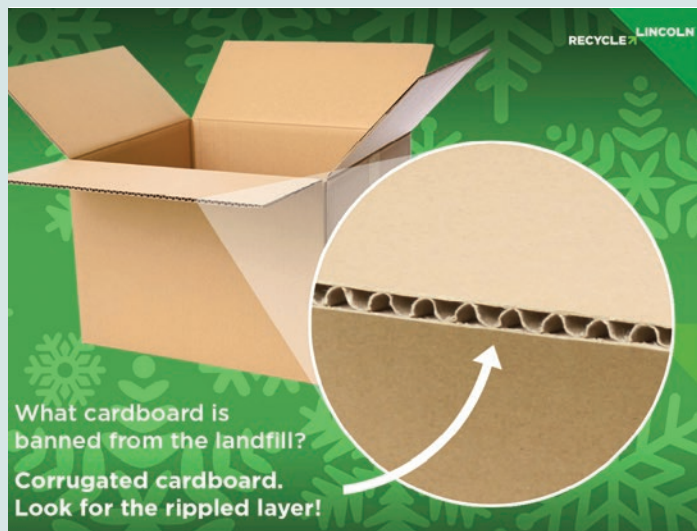
Lassen, a pharmacist by trade, has worked in the gerontology field, providing specialized packed pharmaceuticals for long-term care and assisted living facilities. He also serves as an AARP Nebraska executive council volunteer, advocating for those pursuing careers as aides or other areas such as nursing or home health.

Lassen also has worked to provide better coverage for caregiving in rural areas.

“Right now we suffer from not having a lot of paid services in rural areas,” Lassen said. “We’re trying to create more job opportunities and training in those rural areas to keep people in the smaller communities.”

More Information

For more information on the Nebraska Caregiver Coalition, www.facebook.com/NebCaregiverCoalition. If you’re interested in a caregiver round table, prepare to care class or assisting the coalition, contact Suzy Campbell at 402-802-2309 or NebraskaCaregiverCoalition@gmail.com. 



Thinner cardboard (like cereal boxes) is not banned, but you should still **recycle it!**

▶ TAKE IT TO
THE BIN 

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CITY OF LINCOLN
TRANSPORTATION
AND UTILITIES
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
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LINCOLN, NE 68504
For questions call: 402-441-8215

Nebraska Family Caregiver Support

LIFESPAN RESPITE NETWORK

*Taking care of yourself is
one of the best ways to
help your loved one.*

Respite allows the family caregiver time away to:

- 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.

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

**866-RESPITE (737-7483) or
402-274-3993
respite.ne.gov**

NEBRASKA

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



A Pioneering Area Agency on Aging



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

AGING PARTNERS

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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 LNKTU City (ALLO channel 2, Spectrum channel 1300, Kinetic channel 1005) and LNKTU.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

Joyce Kubicek

- Butler County
Becky Romshek, 402-367-4537
- Fillmore County
Rhonda Stokebrand, 402-759-4922
- Polk County
Amy Theis, 402-747-5731
- Saline County
Michele Tesar, 402-826-2463
- Saunders County
Allison Blake, 402-416-9376
- Seward County: 800-247-0938
- York County, Jerri Merklinger
402-362-7626

MULTI-COUNTY PROGRAMS

- 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

Start Electronically Receiving Your Copy of *Living Well* Magazine Today!

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.

At this time, the fitness center will be operating on appointments only. Please call to make an appointment for the fitness center. This will be necessary as long as health directives related to social distancing and limits on the amount of people gathering are in place.

All ages 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.

Aging Partners Health and Fitness Classes go Online with Zoom

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

To flatten the curve of COVID-19, we will continue to offer some of our health and fitness classes online. The online experience cannot compare to in-person group classes, but they actually 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 and after 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 age 60 and over and family caregivers of any age or \$5 fee for under age 60 for classes meeting one time per week and \$2/\$3 for classes meeting two times per week. Punch cards are available. Your contributions enable us to continue offering the online classes.

We will continue to have an abbreviated schedule this winter due to the pandemic. Classes that will be offered via Zoom include Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance, Qigong: Refresh and Recharge, Dance for Life and a new class titled Movement and Strength with Fun in Between.

Please call 402-441-7575 to register for your Zoom classes during the months of January, February and March. 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. ***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)

Tuesdays and Thursdays

11 a.m. to noon

January 12 through April 1

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)

Tuesdays 1 to 2 p.m.

Fridays 11 a.m. to noon

Jan. 12 through April 2

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.

Continued on page 38.

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Mike Roth: President

Aging Partners News and Events

Continued from page 36.

The following classes are open to join at any time during the session but registration is still required.

Qigong: Refresh and Recharge (12-week sessions)

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.

- Mondays, 10 to 11 a.m.
Jan. 11 through April 12
(no classes Jan. 18 and Feb. 15)
- Thursdays, 2 to 3 p.m.
Jan. 14 through April 1

Dance for Life (12-week sessions)

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.

- Mondays, 2 to 3 p.m.
Jan. 11 through April 12
(no classes Jan. 18 and Feb. 15)
- Wednesdays, 10 to 11 a.m.
Jan. 13 through March 31

Movement and Strength with Fun in Between (new class) (8-week session)

Tuesdays, 2:30 to 3:15 p.m.
Jan. 12 through March 2

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.

Aging Partners Foot Clinics and UNMC Senior Health Promotion Center Services are tentatively scheduled in January, February and March. For more information and to check on clinic status, call 402-441-7575.

Caregiver Support

Aging Partners Caregiver Support Group Meetings Available Via Zoom

Caregivers of family members are urged to attend a series of Aging Partners Caregiver Support Group meetings via Zoom. The meetings are held every Monday from 1 to 2 p.m.

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and preregistration is required by calling 402-441-7575.

The support groups are designed to provide hope, information and a safe environment to share concerns with an emphasis on who takes care of the caregiver. The meetings are open to individuals of any age who provide care for an adult age 60 and over or caregivers who are age 60 and over.

The meetings are led by Sandy Lutz, a licensed independent mental health practitioner and Aging Partners program supervisor. Contributions are accepted but not required for this Older Americans Act service. For more information, call 402-441-6590 or email salutz@lincoln.ne.gov.


Volunteer

NeighborLNK Connects Volunteers with Homebound Seniors, People with Disabilities

Aging Partners' new NeighborLNK program connects homebound residents with volunteers who will do errands for the participants and offer companionship through phone or video calls. Once matched with a homebound neighbor, a volunteer will work with that person to determine services and schedules. Services include prepaid grocery pickup and delivery, pickup and delivery of library books; errands such as food and medication delivery; and video/phone calls for companionship and check-ins. For more information,

visit the City of Lincoln website: lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/aging/neighborlnk/index.htm

To volunteer, contact Aging Partners NeighborLNK at 402-441-7575 or NeighborLNK@lincoln.ne.gov.

More information about Aging Partners can be found at aging.lincoln.ne.gov. 

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