

LivingWell

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Heart of Hard Work: Cook Found Success, Home in Nebraska

page 4

**In New Home,
Geneva Senior
Center Begins
Bright New
Chapter**

page 8

**AI 101: The
Basics of
Artificial
Intelligence**

page 24

John Cook came to Nebraska to coach volleyball — but the experience transformed him, leading to a new lifestyle that brings purpose and fulfillment in retirement.

Saving Seniors Money 2025 Fall Seminars

Lincoln Fire Fighters Reception Hall:
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Medicare Information for 2026

October

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November

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23	24	25	26	27	28	

Mornings

indicated in yellow

9:00 a.m. Refreshments
9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Seminar

Afternoons

indicated in green

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Director's Corner

The Ageless Game: How Sports Support Healthy Aging

Staying active isn't just for the young — it's a winning strategy for aging well. As we grow older, regularly participating in sports can help preserve muscle mass, boost heart health, and maintain balance, reducing the risk of falls. But the benefits aren't only physical.


Engaging in sports also supports cognitive function and emotional well-being. Activities like tennis, swimming, or walking clubs promote social interaction, which has been shown to combat

loneliness and depression in older adults.

Studies reveal that older adults who consistently engage in sports experience slower biological aging, improved mobility and enhanced quality of life. Even low-impact activities such as yoga or tai chi contribute to joint health and mental clarity.

The message is clear: Age might be inevitable, but how we age is, to a large extent, up to us. Whether it's shooting hoops or hitting the

golf course, staying in the game keeps the body strong, the mind sharp and the spirit young.

Bottom line — sports aren't just a pastime; they're a lifelong prescription for healthy aging. 



Randall S. Jones



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Heart of Hard Work: Cook Found Success, Home in Nebraska

It's safe to say former Nebraska volleyball coach John Cook left a lasting legacy, inspiring generations of young girls to dream of wearing Husker red. The California native fully embraced Nebraska's culture and values, becoming one of the most iconic and recognizable figures in the state while cementing his place not just in the record books, but in the hearts of fans across Husker Nation.

"Dr. Jeff Gold said it best: I'm a Nebraskan by choice," Cook said. "I wasn't born here, but I really feel like I'm a Nebraskan, and it was by choice."

Cook grew up in Chula Vista, a community near San Diego, California. After earning his degree from the University of San Diego, he returned to teach at his high school alma mater, Francis Parker School. The position included coaching responsibilities, including junior high boys' basketball and girls' basketball, softball and volleyball.

With little knowledge of volleyball, Cook studied books to learn the fundamentals. His rapid success led to a role as head assistant coach at the University of California San Diego from 1983 to 1984; and in 1987, he co-founded the San Diego Volleyball

Club. A year later, Cook met legendary Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit in San Diego.

Cook made a strong impression; and a few months later, Pettit called with an offer for him to join Nebraska as an assistant coach. The timing was right, and Cook and his wife, Wendy, took the leap that would ultimately change everything.

Road to Nebraska

The Cooks set off for Nebraska in a Toyota pickup and U-Haul, arriving first in Ogallala to face 105-degree August heat, thick humidity and a south wind carrying the scent of nearby feedlots.

"We were questioning if we made the right decision," he laughed.

Cook spent three years as Nebraska's assistant coach before returning to San Diego to coach the U.S. Men's National Volleyball Team. Following the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, he was named the University of Wisconsin head coach. In the 1998 NCAA Division I women's volleyball tournament, Nebraska

defeated Cook's Wisconsin team in the Elite Eight, advancing to the Final Four and ultimately winning the national championship. At dinner after the match, Pettit told Cook he planned to retire and wanted him back at Nebraska.

The Cooks took their time with the decision. With two young children in elementary school and a home on a quiet cul-de-sac, they had every reason to stay. In the end, it was the people of Nebraska who drew Cook back.

"They are friendly and will do anything for you," he said. "Lincoln is a great community with good schools, an ideal place to raise kids. Everyone across the state bleeds Husker red. I tell recruit families, if you're going to work hard, why not be somewhere where they care? This is the pinnacle place to coach because everyone loves Nebraska sports."

Cook emphasized Nebraska's unique culture that fuels athletic success.

"There's a level of respect and a great work ethic in this state," Cook said. "Those are some reasons volleyball is successful not only at Nebraska, but other colleges and high



I wasn't born here, but I really feel like I'm a Nebraskan, and it was by choice."

– Coach John Cook

schools across the state. There are great coaches, a love for sports and a strong sense of pride in the community.”

Building Upon Husker Volleyball Legacy

Cook became Nebraska volleyball’s head coach in 2000 and quickly found himself facing what he describes as the toughest challenge of his career — sustaining success amid high expectations. The team in his first year went undefeated and won the national championship.

“It was only the second time ever in college volleyball that happened,” he said. “Then, everyone expects you to do that again. The expectations and pressure on the athletes and myself to be great every year can bring out the best, but it can also wear you down.”

Cook persevered, drawing on lessons he learned from watching Coach Tom Osborne work with the football team during his first time at Nebraska.

“He’d have four stations and 150 athletes training,” Cook said. “I was blown away, but that helped me be a better coach by knowing how to train and maximize time to make sure everyone’s moving.”

The approach resulted in Cook having a very disciplined team — both on and off the court.

“Our culture was based on very few rules, but we wanted player-led teams in the locker rooms,” he said. “That doesn’t just happen because you say it. I learned you have to work hard at developing leaders. Our team and coaching staff will outwork anyone.”

Another key aspect of the culture was having an attitude of gratitude.

“Nebraska volleyball can change people’s lives, including the student-athletes,” he said. “They should be grateful and thankful for what they’re given here. We have the best facilities, athletic training and coaches. A lot of athletes think it’s like this everywhere, but transfers come in from other top

programs and note the differences.”

Cook retired in January 2025 with an overall record of 883-176, making him the fifth-winningest Division I volleyball coach of all time; and a Nebraska record of 722-103, making him the winningest Division I coach of this century.

He led the Huskers to four national championships in 2000, 2006, 2015, 2017; 12 Final Four appearances and 14 conference titles. Cook’s leadership contributed to the longest sellout streak in NCAA women’s athletics history, with more than 339 consecutive home matches sold out; and record-breaking attendance at matches in Ord, Nebraska, and in Memorial Stadium for Volleyball Day, drawing a historic crowd of 92,003. Cook received the AVCA National Coach of the Year in 2000, 2005 and 2023, as well as Big Ten Coach of the Year eight times. He’s also had some remarkable experiences — riding on the USS Nebraska submarine, flying with the Blue Angels, and taking a Blackhawk helicopter ride with the National Guard.

“Not every volleyball coach is able to do those things, but I’ve fully embraced what it means to live and coach in Nebraska,” he said. “Everyone calls me ‘Coach,’ and that’s a sign of respect you don’t find everywhere. We had the opportunity to take Nebraska volleyball up another level, and we’ve done incredible things with the program,” he said. “Thanks to all the fans who have supported us.”

Cook looks forward to watching the program move forward under his successor Dani Busboom Kelly, former 2006 Nebraska national champion player.

Coaching Transformation

Cook intends to eventually detail the evolution of his coaching throughout his 25 years at Nebraska in a book. Starting with an intense, “in your face” approach, his style transformed over time.

“I made several adjustments to the full spectrum to where I call it ‘coaching with love,’” he said. “I tried to come in

with an attitude of coaching with love and support each day.”

Cook has several theories about why those changes were necessary. He notes today’s athletes are substantially different from those he coached in 2000.

“They’re wired differently, brought up differently — social media has changed them,” he said. “You have to make adjustments as a coach to stay successful as the athletes change.”

Cook believes his 2008 team came closest to reaching its full potential during his 25-year tenure. However, from 2009 to 2014, Nebraska failed to reach the Final Four, leading fans to question what had gone wrong and whether the program was meeting its high expectations.

Reflecting on his career, Cook considers 2015 to 2024 his most successful stretch.

“We went to seven Final Fours, played for five national championships and won the Big 10 four times. That is hard to do,” he said. “To accomplish that, I had to make some changes — and it started with me.”

Some of those changes came from embracing a different lifestyle.

Embracing the Cowboy Life

Although Cook experienced the ranch life during a college summer in

Continued on page 6.



John Cook and No. 415, now known as Rev.

Heart of Hard Work: Cook Found Success, Home in Nebraska

Continued from page 5.

Wyoming, it was in Nebraska where he truly immersed himself in the agricultural world of western Nebraska — horses, cattle and rural living.

“I have tremendous respect for that lifestyle,” he said. “In today’s technology-driven world, people are craving getting in the dirt, working outside with animals and horses. This country was built on horses, and I’ve fallen back in love with that. Ranchers work hard, love America and say prayers before they rope or brand cattle. It’s humbling. They respect their world and everyone helps everyone.”

In 2021, while looking for a horse for his son, Cook purchased Bud — a trail horse — with the help of Nebraska Volleyball Director of Operations Lindsay Peterson, who was searching for a horse for her four young sons. Bud proved too spirited for young children, so Cook purchased him instead.

Bud was playfully named the team’s volunteer assistant coach, attracting attention from recruits and fans on social media. Knowing horses are social animals, Cook added Reba, a trained

roping horse, to his stable the following year, which spurred his interest in roping.

Shortly after, Cook discovered a love for roping dummies through the UNL Rodeo Team. In his downtime, he often could be found practicing roping in the Bob Devaney Sports Center or out on the ranch.

Cook found a strong correlation between roping and coaching: Both require trust and leadership. Just as a horse must trust its rider, a team must trust its coach. It’s about earning trust and working together toward a common goal.

In 2024, Cook began looking for a new roping horse, so he made a trip out to Ord, Nebraska, to visit the ranch of Mark Wray, a seasoned cowboy and rancher with decades of experience working with performance horses. There, Cook rode Bobs, who he purchased at the Pitzer Ranch sale. But there was another horse that left a lasting impression.

During the visit, Wray offered Cook the chance to ride No. 415, just to experience what a great horse felt like. The moment Cook got in the saddle, everything clicked.

“That horse taught me more than I could ever teach him,” he said. “He seemed to know exactly what to do.”

With an impeccable pedigree, No. 415 was expected to fetch a high price at auction. But when the day came, Wray did something he’d never done in the more than 30 years selling horses: he no-saled him. He wanted No. 415 to go to the right home.

Cook, meanwhile, couldn’t stop thinking about the horse. He returned to Ord a few more times to ride him. Around that time, he received a text from Nebraska Athletic Director

Troy Dannen, informing him about his five-year contract extension. Traditionally, coaching contracts at Nebraska include a stair-stepped salary increase over time, but Cook had something else in mind — that horse.

The two sides worked it out, and the extension included an annual salary and a \$70,000 retention bonus. Cook called Wray with an offer, and No. 415 had a new home.

The situation captured national attention, the Wall Street Journal ran a front-page story, “This Legendary Coach Didn’t Want A Raise. He Wanted a Horse.”

“Everyone west of Lincoln involved in ag knows about it and thinks it’s the greatest thing ever to put a horse in the contract,” Cook laughed.

But for Cook, it was about being welcomed into a world he hadn’t grown up in — earning trust in a new community and rooting himself in the values of hard work, humility and connection to the land, shaping the identity of so many Nebraskans.

No. 415 later became Rev, short for Revival, after inviting name suggestions on social media. There were more than 10,000 entries, with Cook narrowing them down to four finalists to put to vote.

To support youth interested in roping, Cook partnered with the UNL Club Rodeo Team to host the inaugural John Cook Team Roping Classic in April 2025 — a youth roping clinic and auction aimed at raising scholarships for the Nebraska College Rodeo Program.

Living the Life

Cook has fully adopted the rancher lifestyle, now owning five horses, five head of cattle and two rescue dogs on



his 5-acre mini ranch in Wyoming. He lives near both his son, Taylor, and daughter, Lauren, who does analyst work for the Big 10 Network. He continues to be involved with Nebraska working as a mentor but makes the most of his time with his two grandchildren — Madden and Griffin — as well as riding and roping.

“Madden loves to help with the horses,” he said. “She’s a real mountain girl.”

Even though he no longer resides in Husker country, it will continue to follow him. A recent trip to Cooke City, Montana, was proof.

“It’s isolated up there, but someone recognized me,” Cook said. “Everywhere I go all over the world, even when I took teams to China, we met people who knew Nebraska volleyball or were from Nebraska.”

At 69, Cook shares two pieces of advice for aging well: keep moving and stay involved.

“The older you get, the harder you gotta go,” he said.

Staying involved also is important, as research shows people in retirement are at risk for depression, may lose their sense of purpose and physical well-being. Cook focuses on starting something new.

“For me, the horse and roping world are a new hobby I’m starting, and I’m going against people who have roped their whole lives,” he said. “It’s a challenge. Physically you need to be in really good shape, and it keeps you on your toes because it happens so fast. So, what’s your new beginning? What’s something new you are starting?”

Cook remains active in Nebraska volleyball. Earlier this year, he was announced as the part-owner and general manager of the Omaha Supernovas, a professional volleyball franchise. He has also backed a partnership between the City of Lincoln and Nebraska for Volleyball

(N4VB) to develop a new volleyball facility in Lincoln, aimed at expanding recreational opportunities. In addition, Cook made his debut as a volleyball analyst on the Big Ten Network this fall.

Another lesson Cook is learning in retirement is the importance of staying socially connected. He’s found a group of recently retired neighbors to bike and ski with, or meet for coffee.

“I’ve met some fascinating people, all because of the path I’m on in retirement,” he said. “I’ve got a whole new network now. I used to network with 18- to 22-year-olds and their parents — this is completely different.”

The growth mindset that fueled Cook’s coaching success still drives him today.

“I used to ask: How can I get better? How are we going to rebuild next year’s team?,” he said. “Now, I get up at 7 a.m. to do chores — feeding, training, cleaning stalls. That’s how I start every morning, and I love it.” **lv**



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In New Home, Geneva Senior Center Begins Bright New Chapter

Senior centers provide a vital space for older adults — especially those who may otherwise feel isolated — to connect, engage and build community.

And the Geneva community strengthened that opportunity when the Geneva Senior Center was relocated in July to 996 “G” St. Located on the city square, the building that dates to the early 1900s was purchased in 2023 and underwent extensive renovations while preserving many of its historic features such as the original brick on the west wall and rim ceiling. The building had sat vacant for 10 years after being used as a grocery store. Now, the new center features a modern kitchen, ADA-compliant design and a bright, spacious layout — twice the size of the previous location, which operated out of a

former high school for 42 years.

“That was just supposed to be a temporary location,” said Cheri Tatro, senior center manager and cook. “I hope this new location provides a permanent home, more activities and is everything the community wants it to be.”

The community residents showed their excitement when more than 200 gathered on July 24 for the center’s opening celebration.

“We’re here to celebrate what has become of this old building and what it can bring to the City of Geneva and Fillmore County,” said Paul Bixby, senior center governing board president.

Aging Partners Director Randy Jones talked during the ceremony about how rural senior centers matter deeply.

“In cities such as Geneva, the local senior center is often one of the




From left are Brenda Motis, Fillmore County Senior Services manager, and Cheri Tatro, Geneva Senior Center manager.

few places where older adults can come for a healthy meal, a health screening, fitness class or even just a friendly conversation. This center will be able to provide all of that and even more,” he said. “It will be a place to stay active, learn something new, gather with friends and stay

independent. And most importantly, feel connected. Because the truth is connections save lives; and in rural communities, senior centers become the heart of that connection.”

The Geneva Senior Center is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Fridays except major holidays, serving coffee and tea each morning and a congregational meal at noon for individuals age 60 and over. Call 402-759-6729 to register for meals no later than 9:30 a.m. the day of

the chosen meal.

“The center is more than the building; it represents a commitment to the seniors and is a lifeline that represents what can happen when a rural community comes together,” Jones said. “We thank every person who helped make this possible and will bring the center to life each and every day — city leaders, community partners, donors, volunteers and especially the staff.” 



Before



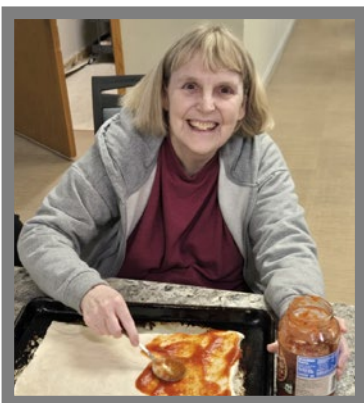
After



The Geneva Senior Center welcomes the community to celebrate its opening on July 24 at a new location.



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Baylor the Voice Behind the Huskers, the Heart Behind OnToCollege

For 32 seasons, John Baylor has been the unmistakable radio voice of Husker volleyball — bringing every play, triumph and heartbreak to life for fans.

Baylor grew up in both Lincoln and Boston. After graduating from Stanford University, he began tutoring students and exploring a variety of paths — from banking to acting — but ultimately turned his focus to sportscasting. In October 1993, Baylor landed a job at KLIN radio station.

“I thought, ‘Why not do it in my hometown?’” he said. “Boston and Nebraska, my two childhood homes, always have a tug on your heart.”

In 1994, Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne asked KLIN to begin broadcasting Husker volleyball. The job went to Baylor; more than three decades later he continues to hold the role of radio play-by-play announcer, having called all five of Nebraska’s national championships and 14 of its 17 Final Four appearances.



John Baylor has called Nebraska volleyball games since 1994.

“I guess I’ve seen more Nebraska volleyball in person than anyone else,” he said. “I’ve had a box seat to the greatest show on Teraflex.”

Baylor’s unique approach to calling the game keeps listeners engaged.

“Sportscasting should be fun, entertaining and thought-provoking,” he said.

Baylor’s known for his unique sayings, like “the Huskers are blocking better than cholesterol,” or “Wisconsin is tougher than a calculus final,” or “Minnesota couldn’t serve fruit cup.”

“I’m searching for an opportunity to have fun,” he said. “I can’t see the audience, so I have no idea how they’re reacting. I’m just describing what I see.”

Baylor’s tenure has spanned the leadership of head coach Terry Pettit and the entirety of John Cook’s storied Husker career, both of whom welcomed and supported him in the role.

“I’ve been able to witness firsthand the struggles and successes of a Division 1 sport that is popular and visible,” Baylor said. “As a broadcaster, you are the conduit to the consuming public. Whatever small role I’ve played in building this juggernaut of popularity that is Husker volleyball, I’m grateful, though I never have anything to do with what happens on the court.”

The experience has left a lasting impression — one that even shapes Baylor’s outlook beyond the broadcast booth.

“Nebraska volleyball play-by-play is something I’m privileged to do,” he said. “I’m grateful to see how those who live Nebraska volleyball are fully

dedicated. That’s inspirational — to enter a world periodically where everyone is so fully committed, and that rubs off on me in other areas of my life.”

Baylor is not only dedicated to filling in fans on what happens on the court, but helping students achieve their dreams through OnToCollege, an in-person and online ACT and SAT Test Preparation course helping students maximize their scores so they can minimize the cost of college. Originally called John Baylor Prep, the idea was born from Baylor’s time tutoring students after graduating from Stanford.

Partnering with more than 550 high schools nationwide, OnToCollege’s engaging courses routinely increase an entire high school average ACT test score by up to three points and SAT score an average of 50 to 150 points.

“Our SAT and ACT Test Prep causes entire schools’ and countless teens’ scores to increase, and that can really change their future opportunities and the affordability of those opportunities,” Baylor said.

Baylor appreciates the deeper purpose the role provides, helping young people achieve their dreams. Though he never thought he’d become an entrepreneur, Baylor uses his strengths in performing and teaching to have a high impact on students in a short amount of time.

While both roles keep Baylor busy year-round, he also talks about how life hasn’t always been easy. Over the past five years, he has faced significant tragedy, including the loss of a stepdaughter and his beloved brother. He and his wife also

have adopted and are raising two grandsons along with their other three children.

The grief doesn't get any easier, but Baylor has found support among the family of Nebraska volleyball fans.

"I'm grateful for Nebraska volleyball and the fans," he said. "I would have struggled even more had I not had the opportunity to enjoy the Husker journey these past two seasons. Grieving is human and it dissipates with time, but it never fully goes away. It's not a bad thing — it jolts me back into being present and grateful for what I do have."

Grounded by purpose and the relationships in his life, Baylor progresses forward — carving meaning from both his personal losses and professional roles.

"John Baylor is part of the institution of Nebraska volleyball and does a great job of presenting

the game," said John Cook, former Nebraska volleyball head coach. "He's done so much, not only for Nebraska volleyball, but for the kids he has helped go to college. To me, he's someone that flies under the radar, but he's had a major impact on the state and explicitly Nebraska volleyball."

Baylor said he doesn't take his fortunate opportunity for granted — having found a place to use his voice, energy and heart to make a difference.

"I get to do two things I love," he said. "Help students unlock doors to their future and call some of the best volleyball in the world. It's meaningful work, and it fuels me."^{LV}



John Baylor, the radio play-by-play announcer for Husker volleyball, also helps students study for the ACT and SAT through his business, OnToCollege.

“I get to do two things I love. Help students unlock doors to their future and call some of the best volleyball in the world. It’s meaningful work, and it fuels me.”
– John Baylor

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Medicare Open Enrollment Begins Soon

By Molli Stolz, Aging Partners benefits counselor

Open enrollment is the time each year when Medicare participants can review and make changes to their prescription drug coverage. This year, between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7, Medicare prescription drug plans announce any new changes to their plans for the following year, giving participants the opportunity to adjust their coverage based on those changes.

Medicare Advantage plan participants may also make changes to their plans at this time. If changes are made to drug plans or Advantage plans, the new plan ends Dec. 31 and begins Jan. 1. Once a new plan is selected and enrollment is complete, the old plan will automatically end on Dec. 31. No further action is needed. Medicare Advantage plans offer an additional enrollment period that begins Jan. 1 and ends March 31.

Why is Open Enrollment Important?

For most people, this is the only time a person can switch Medicare drug plans. If no change is made during this time, the current drug plan will continue for another year. Several changes can occur during this period,

including adjustments to drug tiers and pricing, changes to deductibles, updates to premium costs and revisions to the maximum out-of-pocket limit.


Drug plans can also be eliminated at this time. In such cases, insurance companies often “crosswalk” participants to a new plan — typically one offered by the same company. If no action is taken during open enrollment, the plan will begin on Jan. 1. Participants need to make sure that the plan they are crosswalked into will work for their medications. If medications have changed for the individual, it becomes especially important to check on plan options to ensure the most cost-effective coverage. Watch for mailings beginning in September from your current drug plan.

Even if Medicare coverage and a drug plan were just started because of a recent retirement, it is important to check that the drug plan is still the best one for the coming year.

The government uses the open enrollment time to make changes to Medicare as well. This includes premiums or deductibles for Medicare A and B, plus any additional changes to the drug plans.

How to Compare Drug Plans During Open Enrollment

Individuals may create a Medicare.gov account and complete a drug plan comparison online. Otherwise, there are a few community resources available. Aging Partners offers comparisons throughout open enrollment; call 402-441-7070 to reserve an appointment. Nebraska SHIP also serves as a resource; appointments can be made by calling 402-471-2841. There are also several enrollment clinics offered in the community.

For Aging Partners appointments during open enrollment, it is important to have a list of your current medications and their dosages. You will need your red, white and blue Medicare card. Make sure the Medicare card is the new one and not the old Medicare card with your Social Security number on it. Lastly, you will need to know what drug plan you are currently on to get an accurate comparison of new plans. Some people may have a Medicare.gov account. If so, bringing the login information can also be helpful as most of the information needed is already listed in your account details. Aging Partners does not accept walk-ins for open enrollment. Call 402-441-7070 to schedule an appointment. 



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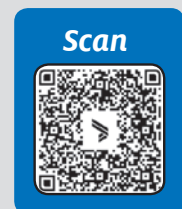


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Prioritize Behavioral Health While Aging

Mental illness and substance use disorders can affect individuals at any age. As we grow older, it's especially important to prioritize mental health as it plays a significant role in our physical health, too.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 14 percent of adults age 60 and over experience a mental health condition. While some may not recognize their need for treatment, there also can be a stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use that creates a barrier to seeking help.

Addressing mental health in older adulthood begins with awareness and open conversation. Too often, symptoms are dismissed as a normal part of aging when they may actually signal a treatable condition. Paying attention to how you and your loved

ones feel — and speaking up when something doesn't seem right — can be a powerful step toward breaking the stigma and getting the support and care you deserve.

Risk Factors

Several risk factors can contribute to depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges in older adulthood. These include:

- Difficult life events: Older adults are more likely than any other age group to experience life events such as grief over loss of loved ones, reduced income, and a reduced sense of purpose after retirement.
- Loneliness: For some older adults, loneliness and social isolation become risk factors due to reduced mobility or independence. "Older adults transition into retirement and no longer have the daily socialization they had for years," said Dave Miers, Ph.D., LIPC, Bryan Health Senior Director Behavioral Health Services. "For some, social isolation can lead to depression and anxiety."
- Chronic health conditions: When combined with other age-related struggles, chronic health issues can lead to mental illness or substance use. "It's important to understand your chronic health condition



Helping older adults obtain treatment and live symptom-free is an achievable goal."

- Dr. Dave Miers



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and seek support to guide you through care and treatment,” Miers said.

- Abuse: Roughly one in six older adults will experience physical, verbal, psychological, sexual or financial abuse — an alarming reality that can contribute to depression and anxiety. To report abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, call the Adult Protective Services hotline at 1-800-652-1999.

Prevention

There are several lifestyle practices that can help prevent mental health issues from gaining hold during aging; these include diet, activity and sleep.

Maintaining a healthy diet and balanced meal plan is essential throughout life.

“A poor diet can cause a number of health issues,” Miers said. “If you or others you know struggle with this, contact a meal service or social program that will ensure you have support.”

It’s also important to stay mentally and physically active. This includes:

- Maintaining or starting a hobby.
- Creating a schedule to do things you enjoy, such as walking, playing a sport or being in nature.
- Planning regular lunch or coffee dates with friends.

For older adults, maintaining a consistent bedtime routine and getting adequate sleep are important for overall well-being. Establishing a structured daily schedule can support this by reinforcing healthy sleep habits and making bedtime rituals easier to follow.

Treatment Options

While it’s often expressed that depression is expected among older adults, this is false.

“Helping older adults obtain treatment and live symptom-free is an achievable goal,” Miers said. “The earlier mental health or substance use problems are recognized and treated, the better.”

Miers also notes that Bryan Health’s Behavioral Health Services offers a range of support and says that Bryan’s West Campus is home to the area’s only inpatient senior mental health unit, serving individuals age 55 and over who require hospitalization for mental illness.


For a mental health assessment to determine if hospitalization is needed — or for direct admission by a psychiatrist — individuals can visit Bryan’s Mental Health Emergency Department, open 24/7 at 2300 S. 16th St. in Lincoln.

Bryan’s Independence Center offers a full continuum of care including substance use evaluation, medical detox, residential care, day treatment/partial care, intensive outpatient care and outpatient care. A walk-in clinic



for substance use evaluations is available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to noon at 1640 Lake St., providing treatment recommendations based on individual needs.

Bryan Health also offers partial hospitalization, outpatient and psychiatric care. Call 402-481-5981 for these services.

If you’re unsure about which services are needed, please take the free anonymous online screening at: www.bryanhealth.com/services/counseling-mental-health/mental-health-online-screenings. 



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COAHP Offers Support to Those Serving Aging Adults

Those who serve older adults are invited to join the Coalition for Older Adult Health Promotion (COAHP), which was established in 1984 through the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department to encourage positive, health-enhancing lifestyle choices among older adults.

COAHP focuses on fostering communication and coordination among Lincoln-area service providers by sharing information, identifying community services, and promoting programs that impact older adults. Much of this work centers around highlighting effective health promotion initiatives.

With more than 160 members, COAHP includes professionals from a wide range of fields that serve older adults, such as senior living communities, funeral homes, hospice, home health care, university faculty, real estate for specialists, placement services, pharmacies, AARP and more.

Members gather monthly for either social or informational meetings.

“COAHP helps educate all senior service providers to know the latest and greatest in the community,”

said Kaye Jesske, COAHP president. “We have speakers to keep us up on technology, medical advice, services in the industry, government issues and employment opportunities. Seniors benefit from well-prepared and educated providers and healthcare professionals in our city.”

Past educational topics have included dementia, depression and aging, Medicare, substance abuse, mental health, coaching, artificial intelligence in healthcare settings and pharmacy regulations.

Membership is open to individuals, businesses or organizations that serve aging adults. More information is available at www.lincolncoahp.com/forms.

Each year, COAHP awards two scholarships to students pursuing careers that improve services for older adults. The group also recognizes outstanding individuals through its annual Volunteer of the Year and Professional of the Year awards, presented at a luncheon in October.

“It’s our way to give a shoutout to those making a difference for aging adults,” Jesske said.

COAHP also coordinates donation drives in partnership with

“COAHP helps educate all senior service providers to know the latest and greatest in the community.”

– Kaye Jesske

Aging Partners, collecting items such as gift cards and fans for older adults in need.

“We love Aging Partners,” Jesske said. “We always look for ways to give back and help serve those who might need a hand or additional resources or do not have family nearby.”

Working closely with member Jenna White, an Aging Partners care manager, COAHP stays connected to community needs and mobilizes to help when possible.

“We all have full-time jobs so we really rely on volunteer help and assistance when we can,” Jesske said. “We all love to give back in any way we can for our seniors in the community.”

For more information on COAHP, visit www.LincolnCOAHP.com or www.facebook.com/COAHPLincoln. 





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Legacy of Care Continues as Daughter Steps Up in Dementia Journey

For decades, Bettie Brown stood out as a vibrant presence in the community — a true social butterfly. She was best known for graciously greeting people from all walks of life into her chair at Hair Suite Salon for more than 40 years.

“She welcomed everyone into her salon,” said her daughter, Myssy Brown. “She was always dressed to the nines; I don’t think she ever wore flats.”

And when Bettie suffered a stroke and aneurysm in 2013, Myssy returned to Lincoln from her life in Texas to help care for her mom. By spending time with her mom daily, Myssy noticed subtle but troubling changes — more frequent forgetfulness, getting lost and other

small shifts in behavior. But bound by HIPAA laws, Myssy was unable to do anything before she returned to Texas in 2019 to battle thyroid cancer. As the pandemic hit and Bettie closed her salon, her condition worsened.

When Myssy then received a call in November 2022 that her mom was missing, it escalated her return to Lincoln — leaving behind her career and family in Texas and becoming her mom’s primary caregiver. Shortly after, Bettie was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia, the second most common type of dementia characterized by the presence of abnormal protein deposits affecting brain function leading to cognitive, movement, sleep and behavioral problems.

“I want everyone to know you’re not on this road alone; there is help.”

– Myssy Brown

“I went from working in law enforcement to being a caregiver; it was a steep learning curve,” Myssy said. “My mom is priceless, so caring for her is worth every penny. Right now, she’s my main priority.”

Myssy does her best to keep her mom healthy and active in the community, but it has been painful watching the decline.

“It’s heartbreaking to see my mom — the diva — who I and so many others in the community look

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up to, just sitting there in a dementia fog,” Myssy said.

Myssy relies on community connections for help, and for those who can’t assist with time, she asks for small things such as bringing paper products when they can. Nonetheless, finding herself needing more support, a friend suggested Myssy look into the Alzheimer’s Association Nebraska Chapter.

“I don’t think many people know about the Alzheimer’s Association and what it can help with,” Myssy said.

The Alzheimer’s Association provides support and resources to individuals living with Alzheimer’s and any type of dementia, as well as to their families and caregivers. These services include support groups, community education and a free 24/7 helpline at 800-272-3900 offering information, crisis support and guidance on care decisions.



Myssy Brown, right, left her life behind in Texas to care for her mother, Bettie Brown, diagnosed with Lewy body dementia.

Myssy also sought help from Aging Partners, which helped her identify and apply for programs she and her mom may be eligible for, including SNAP and the Aged and Disabled Medicaid Waiver services.

“I didn’t consider that because I needed help getting food every now and then to apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), because I’ve

Continued on page 20.

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Legacy of Care Continues as Daughter Steps Up in Dementia Journey

Continued from page 19.

never needed assistance before,” she said. “Both places are a wealth of information.”

Myssy appreciates Aging Partners’ programs for aging adults, including help with transportation, the Handy Home Services for small home repairs and maintenance, support groups and other resources to help offset costs.


As she began seeking support, Myssy noticed there were not many other minority persons represented. She began using her experience and voice to help advocate for the organizations and support she has received, hoping to reach those who may be at home suffering alone.

“Dementia is hard, and it doesn’t matter what color you are — it

can affect us all,” she said. “I want everyone to know you’re not on this road alone; there is help.”

While there are challenges, Myssy takes things a day at a time, keeping her focus on what matters.

“We are always told to plan for the future, but what if the future never comes,” she said. “I want to enjoy being with my mom while she’s here and hope I can help others in a similar situation.”

For more information on Aging Partners, visit aging.lincoln.ne.gov or call 402-441-7070. To learn about the Alzheimer’s Association in Nebraska, visit www.alz.org/nebraska. 

WALK TO END ALZHEIMER’S

Join Bettie and Myssy and team “HairSuite2” at the Walk to End Alzheimer’s Oct. 5 at Victory Park, 600 S. 70th St. Register online in advance or on-site the day of the event. The site opens at 11 a.m., the ceremony begins at 12:30 p.m. with the walk at 1 p.m. For more information or to register, visit act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=18754&pg=entry.



I want to enjoy being with my mom while she’s here and hope I can help others in a similar situation.”

– Myssy Brown

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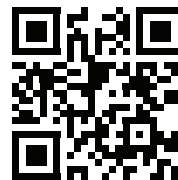


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Elly Dawson, center in pink, and her family at her 95th birthday celebration four years ago. Pictured in the middle row, from left, are Laura, Ron, Sue, Reid, Tim, Nancy, Elly, Sue, Dave, Kathy, Bob, Randy.

Caregiver Corner

Happily Living Independently at 99, Thanks to Family Support



Elly Dawson, 99, stands outside her home where she lives independently, supported by her six children who all live in the Lincoln area.

Elly Dawson continues living independently in the home she’s cherished for decades, a fact she said is made possible thanks to the support of her six children who live nearby.

Born in Omaha in 1926, Elinor (Elly) Detweiler attended college in Lincoln, where she met and married Richard (Dick) Dawson in 1948. The couple began their life together as they resided with Dick’s parents, Reuben and Elsa Dawson, and younger brother Bob, in the family home on South 31st Street — the house Elly still calls home today.

Dick served over 20 years in the U.S. Navy and the family relocated numerous times from California, Florida, and along the East Coast. The Dawsons welcomed six children over a span of ten years: Ron, Reid, Sue, Bob, Nancy and Randy.

“When my husband retired, we decided to move back to Nebraska from New Jersey,” Elly said. “We moved back in 1970, the kids all came, and everyone stayed. There’s no place like Nebraska.”

Not only did they return to the state, but the family also moved back to Dick’s childhood home on 31st Street. Elly and Dick enjoyed a robust life with their many friends, playing bridge, going to Husker football and basketball games and traveling. She was the beloved receptionist for Dr. Frank Stewart for 15 years.

After Dick’s passing in 1993, Elly remained in the same home, surrounded by memories and loved by her children. From daily check-ins to grocery runs and home-cooked meals, the care from their children helps Elly maintain her routine, independence and sense of purpose — all while

staying closely connected to the people she loves most.

"I couldn't get along if I didn't have them," Elly said. "I'm very blessed they all stayed. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them."

Elly no longer ventures out regularly, and she does not drive or cook much these days. After spending much of her life raising her children and preparing three meals a day, the roles have now reversed.

"When we were children, every day she'd get up and her main goal was 'What am I going to feed everybody?'" said her daughter, Sue Shamblin. "She'd feed us all breakfast, pack lunches for school and start planning dinner."

Elly explains how she's deeply grateful for the support her family provides. Whether that's taking out the trash, mowing the lawn, making sure she gets to her appointments, or enjoying time together, her children, grandchildren and even a great-granddaughter ensure Elly has what she needs to remain comfortable and independent.

She stays sharp and engaged — keeping up with the news on TV or in print and attending family gatherings. Her health remains strong as she navigates her 90-year-old three-story home with ease.

Today, she is the proud matriarch of a growing family that includes six children, 14 grandchildren, as well as 16 great-grandchildren from ages 1 to 21. ^{LW}

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AI 101: The Basics of Artificial Intelligence

By Jeremy Hoshor

Artificial intelligence (AI) can sound a bit intimidating – something straight out of your favorite sci-fi movie. Robots taking over the planet?! Is that really where our world is headed?! Truth is, AI in its current form is not that at all. And, possibly without you even knowing, it is likely already part of your everyday life.

If you've ever asked Google for driving directions, Siri for a chocolate chip cookie recipe or obtained a movie recommendation from Netflix, congratulations, you are using AI! OK, you may be thinking, it can't be really that simple, can it? Yes, many forms of AI are very easy to work with.

What is AI, Anyway?

AI can be thought of as machines or computer programs mimicking human intelligence but not emotions (yet!). That can mean understanding speech, solving problems, learning from patterns and making suggestions based on your interactions with it. Since it has the ability to learn, it is able to actually improve over time. The AI you are using today may be different from the AI of tomorrow!



Believe it or not, you're probably already using AI and may not even realize it. If you operate a smartphone, watch streaming services like Netflix and use GPS-based apps for turn-by-turn directions, you've already interacted with AI.

- Voice assistants such as Siri, Google Assistant or Alexa respond to your questions.
- Navigation apps such as Google Maps utilize AI to find the quickest route, factoring in construction and traffic conditions.
- Streaming services will learn your viewing preferences and provide recommendations for shows or movies you may want to watch.

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- Email filters use AI to try to keep your inbox free of unwanted spam and phishing messages.

How Can AI Help Daily Living?

AI may be able to help to remain independent, stay organized and connected. Some examples include:

- Health monitoring. Wearables, such as smartwatches, can track your steps, heart rate, sleep patterns and even ECG/EKG tests. Some advanced devices can also detect falls and alert family or emergency services.
- Medication reminders. Apps or voice assistants can manage your medication schedule and provide reminders for when to take pills.
- Home automation and security. Smart homes can control lights, thermostats and door locks for added comfort and security.



- Communication and language tools. Artificial intelligence can translate speech in real time, generate captions on video calls, and read text aloud, helping with any hearing or language challenges.
- Companionship tools. Chat-bots and games powered by AI can provide conversation and offer brain exercises that may help with memory.

Risks Associated with Using AI

With any technology, there are associated risks, depending on how it is used. Some things to be mindful of include:

- Misinformation and scams. Unfortunately, AI is increasingly being used to create more convincing fake messages, emails, voice recordings and videos. Improvements in this area are happening at a rapid pace. This makes it more difficult to ascertain a malicious message from a legitimate one. For instance, AI can be used by a threat actor to create a voice recording that sounds just like a loved one. They often will send messages pretending to be in some sort of trouble, hoping to trick someone into sending money or providing some sort of assistance. Deep fake pictures and videos can also be made with relative ease and are becoming more and more difficult to tell

Continued on page 26.

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Transitioning to Medicare



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AI 101: The Basics of Artificial Intelligence

Continued from page 25.

what is legitimate and what is not. This is something to be cognizant of, as the frequency of these attacks is likely to increase. When in doubt, check with a trusted person.

- Privacy concerns. In some cases, AI needs to collect data to function correctly. It is always a good idea to review the privacy settings on your devices to ensure you are comfortable with the information being shared.
- Developing an overdependence. While AI can be helpful and convenient, currently it is best used to complement, not replace, critical thinking, professional advice and real human relationships.

Getting Started

If you're new to AI, but are curious and want to try it out for yourself, here are some suggestions to get started:

- Try a voice assistant such as Siri, Alexa or Google Assistant to ask simple questions, play music or add items to your calendar.
- Download a health reminder app like Medisafe, Apple

Health or Samsung Health to help with tracking medications, health monitoring and activity levels.

- Work with a family member or friend. They may be excited to hear you are interested in working with AI and be able to help navigate getting started.

Although artificial intelligence is in its infant stages, it has already made an impact on the lives of many. It isn't just for tech-savvy kids or science fiction fans. It's a tool — one that, when used wisely, can offer more convenience, safety and independence. Concerns do exist in the form of deep fakes of email and voice messages, pictures and videos, which are becoming extremely realistic. This is something to be aware of to keep from being susceptible to scams. However, the goal of AI, when used positively, is to assist, not replace, the people in your life. With a little curiosity and some basic knowledge, you can use AI to make everyday tasks simpler and even enhance your quality of life.

Remember, it's never too late to learn something new. AI might just be the friendly helper you didn't know you needed. ^{lv}

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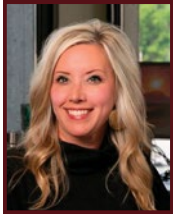


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Living Well | 27

Aging Partners Health and Fitness

ADHD in Older Adults

By Karen O'Hara, Health and Fitness Manager

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is an often-misunderstood condition that affects up to 10 percent of the population, yet it has only been recognized by the medical profession in recent decades. Many older adults do not realize they are affected, suffering in silence and blaming themselves for things out of their control. As an adult with ADHD, I am writing this article to demystify it, and to encourage those who recognize the symptoms within themselves to reach out to their medical providers for guidance. While it is a lifelong condition, there are many options that can provide relief.

ADHD is a complex condition that impacts virtually every aspect of the affected individual's life. People with ADHD are classified as neurodivergent, a class they share with conditions such as autism, dyslexia and obsessive-compulsive disorder, while individuals without those conditions are considered neurotypical. There are large overlaps between ADHD and autism, and a significant percentage of autistic individuals also have ADHD. While its causes are not fully understood, brain scans reveal differences in function, structure and neurotransmitter activity. The neurotransmitter dopamine — the

brain's "reward center" which affects memory, motivation, movement, and attention — is present in lower levels in ADHD individuals.

ADHD is considered an executive functioning disorder of the brain which develops in early childhood. It is not a mental illness, nor is it an intellectual disability. While it can occur in individuals of all intelligence levels, ADHD children represent a significant percentage of students in gifted programs.

Symptoms

There are three categories of ADHD: primarily inattentive, primarily hyperactive, and combined,



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meaning that the person shows strong symptoms of both inattentiveness and hyperactivity (I have the combined type). There are too many symptoms to list in full, but some of the most common ones include:

- Impulsiveness
- Forgetfulness
- Disorganization
- Poor time management skills
- Feeling overwhelmed by daily tasks, but performing well in a crisis
- Problems focusing on a task; trouble multitasking
- Restlessness and fidgeting
- Interrupting others, and trouble following conversations
- Difficulty keeping their homes clean and orderly
- A history of risk-taking behavior, and being very prone to accidents and injuries
- Hyperfocusing by becoming so absorbed in an activity that the individual may not notice anything else and lose track of their surroundings

If you recognize yourself in this list of symptoms — especially if you have struggled with these issues since childhood, it is beneficial to seek help. These symptoms are not your fault.

Diagnosis and Treatment

If you suspect you have ADHD and feel it is impacting your daily living, please see a medical provider for a formal diagnosis and treatment options. Older adults with the condition present special challenges for providers. While stimulant medications such as Adderall are commonly prescribed, they may cause modest increases in heart rate and blood pressure, so your provider may want to explore non-stimulant medication options. There is some overlap in symptoms between ADHD and dementia — and individuals with ADHD are more likely to develop dementia — so if memory issues are present, it's important to screen for both conditions.


Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can also be useful, especially to stop the cycle of self-blame that so many ADHD sufferers experience. CBT can also help the individual develop strategies to cope with the symptoms.

It is extremely helpful to find support. There are in-person support groups available, as well as countless online ADHD groups. I have found many members to be smart, funny, extremely self-aware and full of great advice.

Some Words of Advice

The ADHD-affected brain, due to low levels of dopamine, is constantly (and subconsciously) seeking mental stimulation. This is the reason our thoughts “change channels” so often — a sudden thought or memory will pop

up that our brains find stimulating, regardless of whether that thought or memory is good or bad. It is important to channel this endless need for mental stimulation into healthy activities. Reading, yoga, meditation, walking and other forms of exercise, socializing, and working on hobbies are all forms of healthy mental stimulation. If we do not give our brains a healthy outlet, they may subconsciously seek stimulation in negative ways: obsessively watching (and getting upset) by news on TV and/or social media, arguing online, obsessively ruminating over past hurts, abusing substances, etc. Those activities also stimulate our brains, but in a distinctly harmful way that will make our lives even more chaotic and stressful than they already are.

If you suspect you have ADHD and/or have a diagnosis, please extend yourself some grace. It's easy to fall into a cycle of self-blame. This is not your fault. Humor also helps. It's much easier to adapt if you can find ways to laugh about things you can't control. 

Sources:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/adhd/Pages/Causes-of-ADHD.aspx>

<https://add.org/adhd-dopamine/>

<https://add.org/signs-of-adhd/>



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Yam I Am (Not!)

By Jill Engel, Aging Partners Nutrition

Before you reach for the candied yams this holiday season, keep in mind that they might not even be actual yams! Often, we think of sweet potatoes and yams as the same, without even realizing they are two different and unrelated vegetables.

The sweet potato is one of the oldest vegetables known, having originated in South or Central America thousands of years ago. It is said that Christopher Columbus even brought sweet potatoes to Europe after his first voyage to the free world in 1492! Yams are native to Africa and Asia. The term “yam” comes from the West African word that means “to eat.” Sweet potatoes are more widely available, whereas yams may only be found in specialty stores. It can be confusing to decipher the differences between sweet potatoes and yams, especially since grocery stores often label sweet potatoes and yams the same. Keep in mind that unless you are shopping at a specialty store, you are probably purchasing sweet potatoes.

Yams and sweet potatoes may look similar on the outside but will have color and texture differences on the inside. Yams may have a dark, rough exterior with a purple or white flesh on the inside. Yams also tend to

Roasted Sweet Potatoes and Brussels Sprouts

1-pound Brussels sprouts, halved	1 teaspoon brown sugar
1 large, sweet potato, cubed	1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 tablespoon olive oil	Salt and pepper, to taste
1/3 cup dried cranberries	

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Combine Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, olive oil, brown sugar and seasonings. Toss to combine.
3. Spray baking pan with non-stick spray and pour on vegetables.
4. Roast for approximately 40 minutes or until vegetables are crisp and softened. Top with cranberries.

be starchier and drier. Sweet potatoes have a tan or purple-colored exterior with an orange or white flesh on the inside.

Health Benefits

Sweet potatoes are packed with nutrients and antioxidants that help protect the body. They are an excellent source of vitamin A (rich in beta-carotene) for eye health, and are high in vitamin C and manganese, essential for overall health and development. They also provide fiber and more potassium than a banana! Antioxidants in sweet potatoes help defend against free radicals, while purple varieties contain

anthocyanin, which may promote heart health.

As a complex carbohydrate, sweet potatoes take longer to digest, helping keep you fuller longer and stabilize blood sugar. A medium potato provides about six grams of fiber. Research also suggests they may boost adiponectin, a hormone that supports insulin metabolism and blood sugar regulation.

Sweet potatoes can be a healthy and delicious addition to any meal. As Dr. Seuss says about Green Eggs and Ham, the same can be applied to sweet potatoes in that “You can eat them here or there; you can eat them anywhere!” They can be steamed,



Yam



Sweet Potato

roasted, pureed, mashed or boiled and don't always have to include butter or sugar. They can simply be substituted for any other potato you would incorporate. Consider adding sweet potatoes into casseroles, soups, egg dishes, or topped on a cold salad. Get creative with your seasonings and oils; add in cinnamon, nutmeg or olive oil for extra flavor and nutrition!

Choose sweet potatoes that are firm and without bruises or cracks. Aim to choose potatoes that are roughly the same size, helping them cook more evenly. Ideally, sweet potatoes (or any other potato) should be stored in a cool, dark, well-ventilated area for up to 10 days. Potatoes should be kept out of the fridge, as this can alter the taste. Sometimes sweet potatoes may be more difficult to cut, especially if they are very large. It may be worth microwaving the potato for three to five minutes, then cutting and finishing in the oven.

Keep in mind that although the terms sweet potatoes and yams are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not actually the same vegetable. They both have their own unique textures, taste and colors. Sweet potatoes can be an easy and delicious addition to a meal while providing a variety of health benefits. ^{4W}

Source: www.eatingwell.com

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SCAN ME



Staying Self-Sufficient

By Mitch Sump, Aging Partners Supervisor, Facilities/Programming and Transportation

“**A** falling leaf is simply summer’s wave good-bye.” — Unknown

We here with the Aging Partners programs section hope this article finds you safe and enjoying some cool fall weather. The heat of this past summer was wearing on everyone and on your home as well. The following are a few suggestions to consider for your home as we head into winter.

Check Your Roof

We had some extended periods of intense heat that can play havoc on asphalt shingle roofs. While heat does help asphalt shingles stay sealed, moisture underneath shingles from small cracks can cause them to rise. Combine the lifting of shingles with heat and shingles can tear away from the nails securing them. The heavy thunderstorms and strong winds can also force air under shingle edges and pull them away from nail heads. I got to experience this firsthand in August and, at age 57, am not a fan of climbing on my 8/12 pitch roof anymore! The August storm did put a premium on finding good, licensed roofers but I strongly encourage you to get a roof inspection if you have any concerns. Early detection of issues can defer larger problems later.



Check Your Gutters

It’s always good advice before fall to make sure your gutters and downspouts are clear, of course, but please know that heat and high winds can also cause issues. Although you can’t detect it most of the time, your house does move! Winds, hot and cold cycles, rain and snow, and other weather-related incidents do cause your house to expand and contract. These cause your gutters and downspouts to pull away from securement points. A simple thing you can do is look at the fasteners on downspouts and the gutter nails to make sure they are tight. Connections of elbows should be riveted or screwed in with exterior grade screws to make sure they stay connected. It is very frustrating to look out your windows during rain and see water coming down the side of your house due to something coming apart.

Check Your Foundation

Expanding on the previous section about gutters and downspouts, keeping an eye on your foundation prior to winter, and immediately after winter, is also important. Rain and snowfall can cause soil to erode or compact around your home’s foundation. This occurs even if your gutters are doing their job, and those areas are appropriately landscaped. Adding soil to create drainage away from the foundation helps limit moisture in your basement or under slabs if your home doesn’t have a basement. Limiting the moisture present helps your HVAC systems work more efficiently. It also helps deter mold growth in those areas and reduces musty smells.

Do a “Deep Clean” on Your Yard

Although we all are hopefully enjoying the cooler weather, there are some critters that see it as a sign to look for fall and winter quarters. Mice, squirrels, raccoons, opossums and other animals and insects are getting ready for winter and potential homes for them can include your garage, garden sheds, attics and crawlspaces. To encourage them to seek shelter elsewhere, cut back bushes and other landscaping to limit food and hiding sources. Make sure to clean up and remove brush piles, piles of leaves and landscaping supplies. Piles of bricks, stones and landscaping borders make great homes for various rodents and reptiles. Reducing water sources can also suggest to critters to keep moving, so consider draining garden ponds and similar features in the fall. Tossing pet food and scraps into your neighbor’s yards can also help in getting critters to take up residence there! Just kidding!

Check Your HVAC System

With the high temps this past summer, HVAC systems were running more hours and probably at lower temps. Both these things can add stress to the system. If you have not turned on your furnace yet, it would be a rude shock when you go to do that, and it isn’t pushing warm air! I recommend you do this sooner rather than later with a reputable and licensed HVAC company. Much like the roof inspection, it is cheaper in the long run to discover issues before they become a problem. During extreme cold spells (and hot spells), HVAC companies are in high



demand and higher service fees can apply. I freely admit I don't do this as often as I should, so please do as I suggest, not as I do!

Prepare for Snow

The worst time to find someone to do snow removal is after the snow has fallen. Please start now to find a service, neighbor, local teenager or friend to assist you with this. We have been very lucky in recent winters, so we're probably due.

My word count runneth over, so enjoy fall and keep staying self-sufficient! ^{lv}

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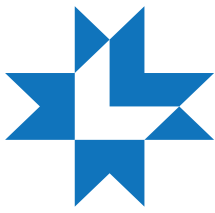
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Key for Services: ▲ = Lancaster only

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 to ensure the independence and full life of the people we serve.

BENEFITS COUNSELING AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE

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 Homestead Tax Exemption.
- **Legal Counseling** – Free legal advice and referral services for those who meet financial guidelines.

NEIGHBORLNK

This program connects qualified, authorized volunteers with homebound seniors (age 60 and over) and persons with disabilities who seek additional support such as grocery pickup and delivery, errands such as food and medication delivery, and friendly phone visits.

▲ 402-441-6076 or 402-441-7575

HANDY HOME SERVICES AND TRANSPORTATION

- **Durable Medical Equipment** – Providing items that address short- and long-term needs. We have various lightly used and/or new in-the-box items in stock including crutches, walkers, canes, wheelchairs, bath chairs and toilet risers. 402-441-7032
- **Handy Home Services** – Minor home repairs and maintenance including mowing, leaky faucets, painting and broken light fixtures. ▲ 402-441-7030
- **Ride within Lincoln to the Centers** – Schedule a ride to your Aging Partners Center (handicap accessible). ▲ 402-441-7158
- **Lancaster County Public Rural Transit** – Scheduled transportation to and from Lincoln to rural Lancaster County areas. (handicap accessible). ▲ 402-441-7031

A listing of other options in the community is available at 402-441-7070.

- **Alzheimer's Disease** – Information and referral. 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938
- **Caregiver Support Services** – Caregivers take care of family members and friends. But who takes care of the caregiver? Support groups provide hope, information and a safe environment to share concerns. ▲ 402-441-7575
- **Health Education Programs** – A variety of topics assisting individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Nutrition** - Noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment and special holiday meals are available at some centers. 402-441-3480

HEALTH, FITNESS AND NUTRITION

- **The Schmieding Foundation Center for Active Living Fitness Center** – Cardio and strength training equipment. A certified personal trainer is available by appointment. ▲ 402-441-7575
- **Exercise** – Tai Chi, chair yoga, Qigong and dance 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). ▲
- **Senior Health Promotion Center** – University of Nebraska-Medical Center and Aging Partners provide comprehensive foot care along with blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and bone density screenings by appointment. ▲ 402-441-7506

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.

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-airings at various other times throughout the month.

SENIOR CENTERS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Social events and activities, health and educational programs. We offer noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment and special holiday meals. Transportation to the centers is available for a suggested contribution. Four centers in Lincoln and three in Lancaster County. ▲ 402-441-7158

Lincoln/Lancaster County Centers

- Belmont Center: 402-441-7990
Belmont Recreation Center
1234 Judson St., Lincoln
- Northeast Center: 402-441-7151
6310 Platte Ave., Lincoln
- Washington Street Center
402-441-7157
Grace Lutheran Church
2225 Washington St., Lincoln
- Victory Park Center: 402-441-7154
600 S. 70th St., Lincoln
- Bennet Center: 402-441-6590
American Legion Hall
970 Monroe St., Bennet
- Firth Center: 402-441-6590
Community Center
311 Nemaha Blvd., Firth
- Hickman Center: 402-441-6590
Hickman Community Center
115 Locust St., Hickman

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 goal is to assist Nebraskans in accessing services and support to help meet their long-term care needs.

- **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.
- **Assisted Living and Nursing Facilities Resource Listings**

SENIOR CARE OPTIONS AND MEDICAID WAIVER

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Nursing Facility Level of Care** – Long-term care and assessment for Medicaid-eligible persons seeking nursing home care.

MULTI-COUNTY CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Providing professional assistance in assessing needs, planning and coordinating home care.

All Counties: 800-247-0938

Jean Holt, Coordinator

- Butler County
Becky Romshek, 402-367-4537
- Fillmore County
Rhonda Stokebrand, 402-759-4922
- Polk County
Becky Romshek, 402-747-5731
- Saline County
Kelly Grimes, 402-441-7070
- Saunders County
Shannon Mitchell, 402-416-9376
- Seward County
Shannon Mitchell, 402-416-9376
- York County
Becky Romshek, 402-367-4537

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
Mark DeMers, 402-764-2711
- Saline County Aging Services
Lori Gude, 402-821-3330
- Seward County Aging Services
Alison Rook, 402-646-7110
- 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
996 “G” St., Geneva
402-759-6729

Polk County

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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

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 Senior Center
725 Nebraska Ave., York
402-362-2496

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.

Aging Partners News and Events

Call 402-441-7575 for Health and Fitness classes or 402-441-7158 for event information.
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direct access to many services. Click 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*. Visit the Aging Partners website to find current and past issues. Contact Deb Elrod at 402-441-6146 or delrod@lincoln.ne.gov to sign up.



Health and Fitness

Schmieding Center for Active Living Fitness Center

600 S. 70th St.
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All are welcome. Cardio equipment, strength training equipment, free weights, balance and other exercise aids available. There is a \$10 monthly suggested contribution for age 60 and over. A \$15 fee is required for individuals under age 60. A certified personal trainer is available by appointment only at no extra charge. For all Health and Fitness classes, there is a \$4 per class suggested contribution for age 60 and over; \$5 per class fee for those under age 60 is required. For all workshops, there is an \$8 per week suggested contribution for age 60 and over and a required \$10 per week fee for those under age 60. Preregistration is required for all classes by calling 402-441-7575. Please register early. Classes that do not have sufficient enrollment will be cancelled.

Evidence-Based Tai Chi Classes

NOTE: Because all Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention classes are progressive, no registrations will be accepted after the fourth class of each session. Tai Chi class sizes are restricted due to space limitations; classes fill up quickly.

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Level I

Eastridge Presbyterian Church
1135 Eastridge Drive
Tuesdays and Thursdays
1 to 2 p.m.

Nov. 18 through Feb. 3, 2026 (no class Nov. 27, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1)

This class is beneficial to people with or without arthritis and can help prevent falls. Participants will practice one or two movements per lesson, progressively leading to completing the core movements. Please note updated information: Suggested contribution is \$4 per class or \$80 per session (20 classes).

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Level II

American Lutheran Church
4200 Vine St.
Mondays and Wednesdays
10 to 11 a.m.

Oct. 13 through Dec. 10
Jan. 5, 2026 through March 11 (no class Jan. 19 and Feb. 16)

This class is only available to those who have completed at least one full session of the Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Level I. Please note updated information: Suggested contribution is \$4 per class or \$72 per session (18 classes).

Evidence-Based StrongBodies Strength Training Program

Victory Park Center, Classroom 105
600 S. 70th St.
Tuesdays and Thursdays
Beginners: 8:15 to 9:30 a.m.
Intermediate: 9:45 to 11:30 a.m.
Intermediate: 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Nov. 18 through Feb. 17, 2026 (no class Nov. 27, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1)

The benefits of strength training for older individuals have been studied extensively and include:

- Increased muscle mass and strength.
- Improved bone density and reduced risk for osteoporosis and related fractures.
- Reduced risk for diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, depression, and obesity.
- Improved self-confidence, sleep, and vitality.

Exercises in StrongBodies utilize dumbbells, adjustable ankle weights and body weights. StrongBodies is an evidence-based fall prevention class and meets twice per week for 12-weeks. Class size is limited. Please note: Suggested contribution is \$4 per class or \$96 per session (24 classes).

Evidence-Based On the Move: Group Exercise for Improved Mobility in Older Adults

Grace Lutheran Church
2225 Washington St.
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 to 2 p.m.
Jan. 6 through April 2, 2026 (no class March 10 and 12)

This will be a group-based exercise program for older adults, designed to improve the efficiency and quality of walking. It is for older adults able to walk independently with or without a cane. It is not appropriate for individuals who require the use of a walker. Suggested contribution is \$4 per class or \$96 per session (24 classes)

Chair Yoga

Eastridge Presbyterian Church
1135 Eastridge Drive
Chair yoga is one of the gentlest forms of yoga available through creative use of a chair. Poses are done seated or chair is used for support during standing and balance poses. Chair yoga is suitable for all ages, fitness levels and physical conditions. Beginners welcome.

- Mondays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
Oct. 20 through Dec. 15
Jan. 5 through April 6 (no class Jan. 19 and Feb. 16)
- Wednesdays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
Oct. 22 through Dec. 17
Jan. 7 through April 8

Dance for Life

Classes focus on balance, strength and cardio health through a unique combination of dance steps done to popular oldies music. Participants warm-up from the chair, move to standing, transition to dance then cool down with standing and seated movements.

- American Lutheran Church
4200 Vine St.
Mondays, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 8 through Dec. 15
Jan. 5, 2026, through May 18 (no class Jan. 19 and Feb. 16)
- Auld Pavilion
1650 Memorial Drive
Wednesdays, 10 to 11 a.m.
Sept. 10 through Nov. 26
Jan. 7, 2026, through May 13

Qigong Refresh and Recharge

Slow, gentle movements help 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.

- American Lutheran Church
4200 Vine St.
Tuesdays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
Sept. 9 through Dec. 16 (no class Nov. 4 and 11)
Jan. 6, 2026, through May 19
- Auld Pavilion
1650 Memorial Drive
Thursdays, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Sept. 18 through Nov. 20 (no class Oct. 9)
Jan. 8, 2026, through May 7 (no class March 19 and April 9)

Evidence-Based Living Well with Chronic Conditions Workshop

Victory Park Center, Classroom 105
600 S. 70th St.
Fridays, 9 to 11 a.m.

Oct. 10 through Nov. 21 (no class Oct. 31)

This interactive workshop helps individuals with chronic conditions. Topics include action planning, communication, healthy eating, physical activity and medication management. Register early, class size is limited. Suggested contributions of \$8 per class for age 60 and over and required \$10 fee per class for those under age 60.

Foot Clinics

Aging Partners Foot Clinics are by appointment only and are held at several locations. Services are available to those age 60 and over.

- Victory Park - UNMC Senior Health Promotion Services/foot clinics are held at Victory Park Center, 600 S. 70th St. The following services are available on most clinic dates only at Victory Park throughout the year: comprehensive foot care, blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol screenings, osteoporosis screenings, ear care and health education. There is a \$25 suggested contribution. Please call 402-441-7506 or 402-441-7575 for more information or to make an appointment for clinic services only at Victory Park.
- Northeast Senior Center (second Monday of each month), 6310 Platte Ave. Call 402-441-7151 to schedule an appointment.
For rural Lancaster County foot clinics, call 402-416-7693 to schedule an appointment. These clinics are held every other month.
 - Bennet Senior Center, American Legion Hall, 970 Monroe St.
 - Firth Senior Center, Firth Community Center, 311 Nemaha St.
 - Hickman Senior Center, Hickman Community Center, 115 Locust St.
 - Malcolm Resource Center, Malcolm Village Hall, 137 E. 2nd St.

Aging Partners Events
Call 402-441-7158 for information
and reservations.

Senior Center Meals

Call the individual centers at least two days in advance to reserve a meal. See page 35 for a complete list of centers. \$5 suggested contribution age 60 and over; \$10 fee under age 60. \$5 suggested transportation contribution for age 60 and over.

Belmont Senior Center: 402-441-7990
1234 Judson St., Room 002

- Chair Yoga with certified instructor Chery Bieber
Tuesdays, at 10:45 a.m.
- Native American Flute Concert with Eldonna Rayburn
Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 10 a.m.

- Tie-Dye Tea Towel Workshop
Thursday, Oct. 16, at 10 a.m.
Learn fun and easy tie-dye techniques for a one-of-a-kind creation. Cost: \$5, materials provided. Workshop limited to 12 participants. Reservations required.
- Music BINGO with Elliott Piper
Friday, Nov. 14, at 10 a.m.
- Holiday movie special
Monday, Dec. 15, at 9:30 a.m.
Hot chocolate and popcorn included!

Northeast Senior Center: 402-441-7151
6310 Platte Ave.

- BINGO
Wednesdays, at 10 a.m.
- Pitch Party
Tuesdays and Fridays, at 10 a.m. and socialization.
- Lincoln Fresh Food Truck
First and third Tuesday of each month, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
November is the last visit of the year.
- Art with Anna Alcaide
Thursday, Oct. 9, Nov. 13 and Dec. 11, at 10 a.m. Anna leads participants through beginner painting techniques. Class size limited to 10. Reservations are required.
- Live Music, at 10 a.m.
Oct. 3 – Mike McCracken
Oct. 17 – Tim Javorsky
Oct. 31 – Chris Sayre
Nov. 7 – Denise Howe
Nov. 21 – Brian Gerkenmeyer
Dec. 5 – Mary Link
Dec. 16 – Holiday Music BINGO
Dec. 19 – Harpist Heidi Beran

Victory Park Center: 402-441-7154
600 S. 70th St.

- Monday, Oct. 6, at 10 a.m.
Medicare Open Enrollment Info and Medicare BINGO with Colleen Ozanne, Nebraska SHIP
Open enrollment is Oct. 15 through Dec. 7.
- October birthday party with a show by Magician Dragan
Thursday, Oct. 16, at 10 a.m.
- Annual Halloween party and costume contest.
Friday, Oct. 31, at 10 a.m.
- November birthday party with musician Denise Howe
Thursday, Nov. 13, at 10 a.m.

Continued on page 38.

Aging Partners News and Events

Continued from page 37.

- December birthday party with harpist Heidi Berans
Thursday, Dec. 18, at 10 a.m.

Firth Senior Center: 402-416-7693

Firth Community Center
311 Nemaha St., Firth

- Nebraska folk music with Ian Egenberger
Oct. 20, at 10:30 a.m.
- Blood pressure checks by Lakeview Living staff, Firth
10 a.m. – BINGO; brought to you by Old Cheney Rehabilitation
Nov. 3, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Musical performance by Denise Howe
Dec. 8, at 10:30 a.m.
12:15 p.m. – “Air Fryer Cooking”
presentation by Devin Mueller, Aging Partners

Bennet Senior Center: 402-416-7693

American Legion Hall
970 Monroe St., Bennet

- “Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired” presentation by Katia Castro, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Oct. 16, at 12:15 p.m.
- Movie and popcorn
Oct. 21, at 10:30 a.m.
- Foot Care Clinic
Nov. 20, 9 a.m. to noon
Call Monte at 402-441-7693 to schedule an appointment.
- Armchair Travelers – Explore the city of Lisbon, Portugal
Nov. 25, at 12:15 p.m.

- Christmas craft
Dec. 16, at 10:30 a.m.
- Holiday trivia and December birthdays!
Dec. 18, at 12:15 p.m.

Hickman Senior Center: 402-416-7693

Hickman Community Center
115 Locust St., Hickman

- Safe Driving Tips for Seniors with Jeanne Bietz, Nebraska DHHS
Oct. 8., at 12:15 p.m.
- Strength and Balance Training with Bryce Rolenc, Peak Performance
Nov. 26, at 10 a.m.
- Musical performance by Tom Ficke
Dec. 10, at 10:30 a.m.

Holiday Meals

\$7 suggested contribution age 60 and over
\$10 fee under age 60.

- Thanksgiving
All Lincoln Centers – Tuesday, Nov. 18
Firth – Monday, Nov. 17
Hickman – Wednesday, Nov. 19
Bennet – Thursday, Nov. 20
- Christmas
All Lincoln Centers – Tuesday, Dec. 16
Firth – Monday, Dec. 15
Hickman – Wednesday, Dec. 17
Bennet – Thursday Dec. 18

Free Digital Literacy Events

Digital literacy is essential in today’s connected world. Aging Partners, with help from University of Nebraska-Lincoln students, will offer one-on-one personalized assistance with smartphones, iPads and laptops. Sessions are Wednesday, Oct. 15 and Nov. 12 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at Victory Park, 600 S. 70th Street in Lincoln.

Instruction is at the older adult’s pace. This service is free, but registration is required. Call 402-441-7158.

York County Aging Services Open Enrollment Look-Up and Enrollment Meetings

Medicare open enrollment is Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. Review your 2026 Medicare options. York County Aging Services’ Lori Byers and Christina Kaping will conduct meetings in various York County locations. To check dates, times, locations and schedule your free non-biased review, call 402-362-7626.

Support Groups

Aging Partners Caregiver Support Group

St. Mark’s United Methodist Church
8550 Pioneers Blvd., Room 137
Enter through door 6 on north side of St. Mark’s
2nd Tuesday of every month
5 to 6 p.m.

Caregivers take care of family members and friends. But who takes care of the caregiver? The Aging Partners Caregiver Support Group is led by a Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner. Eligible caregivers are:

- An individual of any age providing care for an older adult, age 60 and over
- Providing care for a person with Alzheimer’s disease, brain injury or a related brain disorder
- Over the age of 55 and raising a grandchild
Registrations are not needed, walk-ins welcomed. **lv**

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