

# THE COMMUNICATOR

A WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING PUBLICATION

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## DO YOU OR YOUR AGING PARENT NEED HELP?

*Sometimes age sneaks up on us. Dad and Mom may have seemed themselves the last time you visited, whether a month or even a year has passed. Mental and physical health decline often surprises family members, especially if parents or senior loved ones seemed fine on the last visit. The key is to be aware of the small problems or signs that something may be wrong so that your family has an inkling of health decline and can properly prepare for the future.*

Aging parents and their children are often in denial that there is a problem. It's hard for parents to admit that they need help and no one wants to lose their independence. Daily living tasks sometimes get to be too much as we age and its important for family members and loved ones to step up and address the problem when this happens, even if its painful. The problems will not go away and usually need to be addressed in a timely manner. Below you will find some of the signs that you or your aging parents needs help.

- ◆ Bounced checks, calls from collections and late payment notices.
- ◆ Changes in mood or extreme mood swings.
- ◆ Cluttered, dirty and/or disorganized house.
- ◆ Confusion and uncertainty when performing one familiar tasks.
- ◆ Depressed or low energy temperament.

- ◆ Disheveled clothing.
- ◆ Expired/spoiled groceries that don't get thrown away.
- ◆ Forgetfulness.
- ◆ Loss of interest in activities and hobbies.
- ◆ Poor personal hygiene.
- ◆ Unexplained bruising.
- ◆ Unexplained dents or scratches on the car.



The burden often fall on the family to recognize the signs that an aging parent might need help with daily living tasks. This doesn't necessarily mean that your senior loved one has to go to an assisted living or a nursing home, but they may need some extra help. If they're not willing to admit it, identifying the signs that your aging parent needs help is the first step.

If happiness or health seems to be compromised, its time to have a conversation about problems, whether its finding in-home care, a retirement community or a senior living community. Its important to find the right care options for each unique family situation.

If you identify any of the tell-tale signs that you or your loved one needs assistance, contact the Aging & Disability Resource Center for assistance at 913-573-8531.

### In this Issue:

- ORAL HEALTH TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS
- HOW TO STRENGTHEN IMMUNITY DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON
- 5 NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS FOR EVERY SENIOR
- COLD WEATHER RULE
- CAREGIVERS HONORED FOR NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH
- LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)
- HISTORY OF GROUNDHOG DAY
- MEALS ON WHEELS CHANGING ITS DELIVERY ROUTES
- UTILITY TAX REBATES
- VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED
- WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AGING ALONE
- NUTRITION CORNER

## ORAL HEALTH TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS



During National Nutrition Month and beyond, the **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics** (formally the American Dietetic Association) encourages everyone to include healthy foods from all food groups through this year's theme.

Food is meant to be enjoyed, but eating less is the key to weight management and

disease prevention, according to the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

One way to accomplish this is by eating the foods you enjoy while being mindful of portion sizes and total calories. A key step to maintaining a healthy lifestyle is putting less food on your plate.

For more healthy eating tips; visit: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

## HOW TO STRENGTHEN IMMUNITY DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON

Information provided by A Place for Mom

For older adults, having a strong immune system is important, especially during cold and flu season. Seniors are more vulnerable to infections, so we need to take extra precautions to ensure we stay healthy. Below you'll find 10 immune system boosters that you can use to get through the season without catching an illness.

- 1) **Consider herbal supplements or multivitamins.** An option for fighting infections and increasing nutrients, seniors should talk to our doctors first before adding herbs such as echinacea, ginseng, multivitamins or probiotics to our regimen.
- 2) **Eat a healthy, nutrient-rich diet.** Older people tend to eat less and have less variety in their diets. Fruits and vegetables are essential to good health. Maintain a low-fat, low-sugar diet that incorporates lean proteins and whole grains.
- 3) **Exercise.** Regular physical activity promotes circulation and heart health and relaxes the body and mind.
- 4) **Get vaccinated.** Flu vaccinations have shown to be effective for around one-quarter of older adults. Seniors who get the flu vaccine have significantly lower rates of sickness.
- 5) **Reduce stress.** Stress has been linked to a number of illnesses, including heart disease and stomach problems. Whether it's isolation, social stress or another form, stress can suppress a senior's immune system, making them more susceptible to viruses.
- 6) **Sleep.** One of the best natural immune system boosters, sleep helps us respond better to inflammation and stress.
- 7) **Stay hydrated.** Seniors tend to sense thirst less than younger people. But older adults need at least eight to nine
- 8) **Stay positive.** A healthy outlook on life boots endorphins, which make us feel good. Seniors who keep up with activities and hobbies that make them happy have a better chance of staying healthy and positive.
- 9) **Try some superfoods.** Foods like avocados, berries, broccoli and kale have been shown to improve immune system performance. Some superfoods even boost cognitive function and help fight dementia.
- 10) **Wash hands.** Washing hands regularly scrubs away germs. Covering coughs and sneezes helps prevent diseases from spreading. Illness isn't inevitable, but good habits lend to keeping seniors happy and healthy so they can enjoy the most our of life.



## 5 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR EVERY SENIOR

What would the New Year be without the age-old promise of New Year's resolutions. Each new year is a gift. It's another opportunity to take stock of our lives and decide what we'd like to change. We can make changes large and small. Here are five New Year's resolutions that active seniors should keep to start the New Year on the right foot.

- 1) **Master the Internet.** Connecting to the web can boost your awareness to the world at large. Older adults have a greater propensity for finding like minded individuals who share their interests online. If you're going to connect and start using the web regularly, remember to beware of senior internet scams. Here are two resources you should not live without. *Google Search* allows you to look up anything. Yes, anything! You'll be a mere click away from knowing how to make that recipe just right or learning the definition of a word. Social Media. Scores of social media sites allow you to engage with friends old and new.
- 2) **Prepare for the future.** It's never too late to start. We have all grown older and require some help here and there. As you begin to age in place, start looking to rely on proper avenues of senior care. Let your family know whether you eventually want to have a caregiver, age in place or move into a comfortable home. Lay out plans now to avoid headaches in the future.
- 3) **Eat Healthy in the New Year.** Your diet is the fuel for your day and helps to keep your mind sharp. Avoid processed food and snacks high in sugar and sodium. Healthy alternatives for food are plenty. Include avocado and walnuts in your diet and be sure to consume fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 4) **Schedule Regular Checkups.** Keep your doctor informed of any healthy changes. Report any health and lifestyle changes so they can better assist you.
- 5) **Engage and Socialize.** There are numerous ways to keep an active lifestyle. This simple action of getting up, identifying your interests and making contact is a surefire way to immerse yourself in an active lifestyle. You can volunteer for a cause you believe in or join a book club or exercise group. Whether you're reading the latest bestseller or counting reps at your exercise class, you'll make a bunch of new friends in no time.



### COLD WEATHER RULE

*November 1, 2018 through March 31, 2019*



The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) wants Kansans to have electric, gas and water services needed to keep their home warm during the winter. The KCC also recognizes the customer's responsibility to make arrangements to pay for that service. The Cold Weather Rule was designed in 1983 to ensure both goals are met.

The Cold Weather Rule ensures you will have electric and gas services for your home during the winter. You must make pay arrangements with your utility company to use the Rule and pay your current bill in full while paying off the overdue amount.

If you have questions regarding the Cold Weather Rule, you may call (800) 662-0027 or you may visit [www.kcc.state.ks.us](http://www.kcc.state.ks.us).



## CAREGIVERS HONORED FOR NATIONAL CAREGIVER MONTH



In honor of National Caregiver Recognition Month (November), the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging (AAA) sponsored caregivers with the "Take the Night Off" project. The goal was to provide a night of needed respite from the task of dinner preparation.

Each caregiver received dinner for two for a week. Dinners were delivered by volunteers.

To qualify, the caregivers must have met eligibility requirements under the Older

American Act and/or been identified as a caregiver by the Area Agency on Aging in 2018.

If you are an adult family member or another individual who is an informal provider of in-home and or community care to someone who is over the age of 60, you're eligible for the Caregiver which is designed to provide respite.

Call the AAA is you're needing respite care at 913-573-8531.

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## LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)



### Home Energy Assistance Program

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit. Those payments are made directly to the vendor.

In order to qualify, applicants must be:

- ◆ Living at the address, be personally responsible for purchasing heating costs incurred at the current residence.

- ◆ Demonstrate a recent history of payments.
- ◆ The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 130% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Applications are accepted beginning January 22, 2019 through March 29, 2019. You may dial 1-800-432-0043 to request an application or apply online at [www.dcf.ks.gov](http://www.dcf.ks.gov).

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## HISTORY OF GROUNDHOG DAY



Groundhog Day, February 2nd, is a popular tradition in the United States. It is also a legend that has clouded the mists of time with ethnic cultures and animal awakenings on specific dates. Myths such as this tie our present to the distant past when nature did, indeed, influence our lives. It is the

day that the groundhog comes out of his hole after his long winter sleep to look for his shadow.

If he sees it, he regards it as an omen of six more weeks of bad weather and return to his hole. If the day is cloudy and hence shadowless, he takes it as a sign of spring and stays above the

ground. The groundhog tradition stems from similar beliefs and the days of early Christians in Europe and for centuries the custom was to have the clergy bless candles and distribute them to the people. Even then, it marked a milestone in the winter and the weather that day was important.

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## MEALS ON WHEELS IS CHANGING ITS DELIVERY ROUTES

Currently, there are four routes delivering meals to our Meals on Wheels customers. Beginning in January 2019, one of those routes will be combined into the other three routes for delivery. Those customers receiving hot meals will see a difference in their meal delivery time. No need to worry, you'll still get your

meal as expected.



Should you have any concerns regarding your delivery, you may contact Meals on Wheels by calling 913-573-8546.

*deliver a difference*

## MEET YOUR NEW CASE MANAGER

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging and Disability Resource Center is pleased to announce that we have selected two new Case Managers for Wyandotte County. Both Sherrie Watkins, LMSW and Crystal Swope, BSW began



Sherrie Watkins and Crystal Swope, New Case Management team for Wyandotte County.

training in late December 2018 and should be sending correspondences to their current customers soon.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns regarding your current services or want to find out who your case manager is, please feel free to contact the AAA at 913-573-8531.

## UTILITY TAX REBATES - JANUARY 3 - MARCH 29, 2019

Utility Tax Rebates will be accepted from January 2, 2019 - March 29, 2019.

Questions regarding the application process may be directed to the Unified Government's Clerks office at 913-573-5260.

### To qualify, you must:

- Have a total household income of less than \$25,000
- Live in Kansas City, Kansas (residents of Bonner Springs and Edwardsville are **not** eligible)
- Born on or before December 31, 1952.

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging will assist with applications **by appointment only** on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You may call for an appointment to 913-573-8531 or use walk in hours at the Clerks Office located inside City Hall.



## VOLUNTEER



The Unified Government recognized those enrolled in their Volunteer Program by serving them breakfast in the lobby of City Hall. The event was held on Friday, December 7, 2018.

Pictured to the left: Jane Davis, Lorene Jones, Modestine Bell, Patricia Berry, Laleta Jones, Ruby Smith and Gladys Henderson. These volunteers perform duties at the Area Agency on Aging and other locations. Thank you ladies!



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AGING ALONE

If you're aging alone without a partner or spouse, you've got plenty of company. According to a study by the Administration on Aging, about 28% of older adults live alone.

Many people choose to age and live alone, while others may be divorced or widowed. Plenty of older adults also outlive their siblings and sometimes, even their children.



Yet many people don't anticipate or prepare to age alone, even though the likelihood is high. Below you'll find the things you need to know about aging alone:

1. A Care Manager can help. You may be in good health now, but if you have a health crisis or long-term diagnoses such as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's, you may benefit with a Care Manager. A Care Manager specializes in geriatrics, acts as sort of a professional relative who can help you identify and find ways to meet your needs as you age.
2. Aging in place is expensive. You may imagine yourself remaining in your home for the rest of your life. Maybe you plan on receiving in-home care if necessary and renovating your home for mobility and safety needs. If you're planning to build a walk-in shower or install ramps, do those improvements before they become a necessity. Those improvements will assist with your independence as you age.
3. Being alone doesn't mean lonely. On the contrary, aging solo means that you're in total control of your destiny. You can be as neat or messy as you like. You pick and choose your friends and their involvement in your life.
4. Have both a formal and informal network. Along with friends, make sure you have a network of legal and medical professional advocates that you trust. This network could include contacts at local senior services agencies, doctors, an estate attorney and a trusted therapist.
5. Make sure you are legally protected as you age. Do you have a will, an estate plan, a trust, a medical and financial power of attorney or advance directive? Look into having an attorney assist you with making those plans.

As you age, treat yourself kindly. Access your personal situation and talk about it with people you trust. Make plans for the rest of your life early so that your wishes are recognized while you're aging gracefully.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

### DO YOU ENJOY HELPING OTHERS?

Become a Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) Counselor

#### VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

- Set time aside to counsel on the phone
- Attend community functions
- Be comfortable speaking in front of others for individual and group presentations

#### Free training is available.

Computer knowledge is a plus as training is available online and can be done in the privacy of your home.

**If interested, contact the SHICK Coordinator at 913-573-8531**

## NUTRITION CORNER

Eating healthier doesn't have to be hard or take a lot of time. Here are a few tips to eating healthier and many don't even involve cooking.

- ⇒ Look for "ready to eat" foods. Fruits and veggies like baby carrots, sugar snap peas, pre-cut celery, apple slices or even a banana make healthy, easy snacks.
- ⇒ String cheese and nuts pack protein and healthy fats.
- ⇒ Watch what you drink. Sugary beverages (including juice, sports drinks, flavored waters, energy drinks and more) cause your blood sugar levels to spike high and then rapidly fall, which means you feel hungry and irritable, which often leads to reaching for a sugary snack. Instead, choose water and unsweetened beverages like tea or coffee more often.

Remember, healthy eating takes many different forms, finding what works for you helps you to stay on track now and all year long!



### EASY ROASTED BROCCOLI

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 14 ounces broccoli
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Cut broccoli florets from the stalk. Peel the stalk and slice into 1/4 inch slices. Mix florets and stem pieces with olive oil in a bowl and transfer to a baking sheet; season with salt and pepper.
3. Roast in the preheated oven until broccoli is tender and lightly browned, about 18 minutes.



**Hint:** Aluminum foil can be used to keep food moist, cook it evenly and make cleanup easier.

### HAPPY NEW YEAR

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- BLACK EYED PEAS
- BLACK HISTORY
- BLIZZARD
- CHAMPAGNE
- CHEERS
- CHINESE NEW YEAR
- CHOCOLATES
- COUNTDOWN
- DIAMONDS
- EXERCISE
- FLURRIES
- FOOTBALL
- GROUNDHOG DAY
- HAPPY NEW YEAR
- HEARTS
- HOMESTEAD
- I LOVE YOU
- KISSES
- LOVE
- MARTIN LUTHER KING
- NOISE MAKERS
- PINK
- PRESIDENTS DAY
- RED
- RESOLUTIONS
- SLUSH
- SNOWFLAKES
- STREAMERS
- SUPERBOWL
- SWEETS
- TIMESQUARE
- UTILITY TAX REBATES
- VALENTINES DAY
- WEATHERIZATION
- WINTER

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## Wyandotte/Leavenworth

### Area Agency on Aging

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## JANUARY >>>

### NEW YEARS DAY

*Tuesday, January 1, 2019*

*Unified Government Offices Closed*

### MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

*Monday, January 21, 2019*

*Unified Government Offices Closed*



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The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, or handicap.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services at 1-800-432-3535.

Linda Ramirez, Editor

## FEBRUARY >>>

### VALENTINE'S DAY

*Thursday, February 14, 2019*

### PRESIDENTS' DAY

*Monday, February 18, 2019*

*Unified Government Offices Closed*