

# THE COMMUNICATOR

A WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING PUBLICATION

Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

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JULY/AUGUST 2019

## BEAT THE HEAT: Summer Tips for Seniors

[www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com)

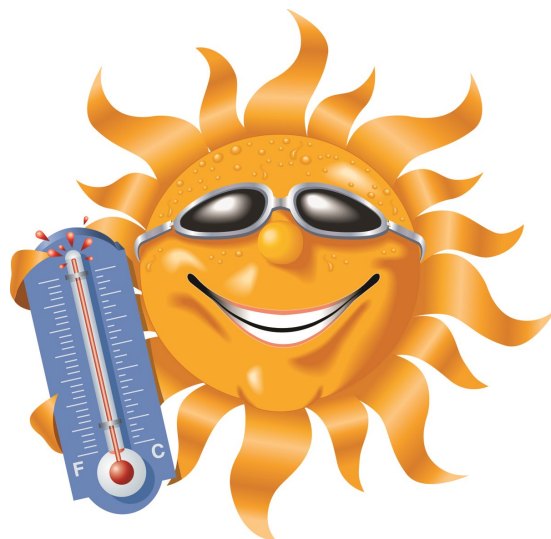
Every summer, thousands of Americans suffer from heat stroke, heat exhaustion and dehydration. And each year, an average of 300 people in the United States die from heat-related illnesses.

Seniors are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses as their bodies do not effectively cool down and it takes longer to recover when they get overheated. As the temperature starts to rise, it is important to take a moment to think about ways to beat the heat and avoid unnecessary illness. Below are some tips that can help you or someone you love battle the heat, sun and humidity, which are unavoidable throughout the summer months:

- **Check your home for proper ventilation** - Excessive heat, when temperatures and humidity reach 90 degrees or above can be dangerous, especially to those who are home without air conditioning or fans. Many seniors will sacrifice a cool breeze from an open window due to security concerns. Inexpensive safety latches are available for windows that allow the air to circulate, and prevent the window from being completely opened from the outside. Check with your local hardware store for options.
- **Seek relief from the heat in public buildings that are air-conditioned** - Not every senior has air conditioning in their home and there is a point at which fans can't combat the summer heat. When this occurs, visit with friends or family for a welcome break from the heat.
- **Plan ahead for outdoor activities** - During hot weather, everyone, especially seniors, should wear loose fitting, cool, light-colored clothing and a hat or cap. Whenever possible, try to stay in the shade and be sure to use a high SPF sun block (30+) in order to protect a senior's sensitive skin.
- **Drink plenty of replenishing fluids** - Alcoholic beverages and caffeine should be avoided since they can cause dehydration. Water is a great option, but does not effectively replace the potassium and sodium that we lose when perspiring. Popular "sports drinks" such as Gatorade, Powerade and/or inexpensive home-made substitutes are great choices for rehydrating the body.

Always be on guard for symptoms of heat exhaustion, which include pale, cold or clammy skin, extreme thirst, light-headedness, fainting, mild nausea, vomiting and excessive sweating. Signs of heat stroke include hot, dry skin, a fast, strong pulse, confusion and a body temperature of 104 degrees or higher. If a person exhibits signs of heat stroke, this is a serious medical emergency and 911 or your local emergency medical team should be contacted.

The good news is heat-related illnesses and injuries are preventable. If you understand the signs and watch out for the symptoms, you too can beat the heat this summer season.



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# PRACTICING GRADITUDE - Ways to Improve Positivity

[newsinhealth.nih.gov](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov)

How often do you feel thankful for the good things in your life? Studies suggest that making a habit of noticing what's going well in your life could have health benefits.

Taking the time to feel gratitude may improve your emotional well-being by helping you cope with stress. Early research suggests that a daily practice of gratitude could affect the body, too. For example, one study found that gratitude was linked to fewer signs of heart disease.

The first step in any gratitude practice is to reflect on the good things that have happened in your life. These can be big or little things. It can be as simple as scoring a good parking space that day or enjoying a hot mug of coffee. Or, perhaps you feel grateful for close friend's compassionate support.

Next, allow yourself a moment to enjoy that you had the positive experience,

no matter what negatives may exist in your life. Let positive feelings of gratitude bubble up. These skills have been shown to help some people increase their positive emotions. By practicing these skills, it will help you cope better with whatever you have to cope with. You don't have to be

experiencing major life stress. It also works with the daily stress that we all deal with. Ultimately, it can help you be not just happier but also healthier.

While practicing gratitude seems to work for some people, it doesn't for everyone. You can learn a few skills too. These include meditating and doing small acts of kindness. Some studies are developing and

testing skills with people who have illnesses like advanced cancer, diabetes, HIV infection and depression. Put some effort into experiencing gratitude on a daily basis and see how it goes. It might just surprise you that despite how bad things are - there are things you feel grateful for along side it. And feeling grateful may help improve both your mind and body.



## FARMERS MARKET LOCATIONS (WYANDOTTE COUNTY)

Rosedale Farmers Market	4020 Rainbow Blvd. Kansas City, KS	Sundays, 10am - 2pm
Bonner Springs Farmers Market	129 Elm Street, Bonner Springs, KS	Saturdays: 8am - 12pm
KCK Market @ the Health Dept.	6th & Tauomee, Kansas City, KS	Wednesdays: 7:30a - 1pm
KCK Market @ Catholic Charities	2220 Central Avenue, Kansas City, KS	Tuesdays: 7:30a - 1pm
KCK Market @ KCKCC	Campus Blvd & Argentine Lane, KCK	Thursdays: 7:30 - 1pm
Reds Produce	5931 State Avenue, KCK	Tuesday - Saturday: 9am - 5pm
Ford Veggies Market	1917 South 94th Street, KCK	10am - 6pm



**Dear Newsletter Recipient:**

For years "The Communicator" has served as a vital means for providing seniors in Wyandotte County important information regarding aging news, legislation, events, programs, services and much more!

The newsletter's continuity depends on your donation for its existence.

Please help us to continue to provide this important publication by becoming a sponsor!

Respectfully,

*The Newsletter Committee*

**Thank you to the following who donated to the cost of this newsletter!**

**Evelena Blackwell**  
**Pauline Estell**  
**Clara Whitaker**

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**Send Donations to:**

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging  
Attn: Newsletter Committee  
849 N 47th Street - Suite C  
Kansas City, Kansas 66102

**NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZENS DAY TRIP***Wyandotte County History Tour*

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging will be taking a day trip to the Kaw Point River Walk, the Underground Railroad Museum, and the Wyandotte County Museum on August 21, 2019 in honor of National Senior Citizens Day.

The \$10 fee for the trip includes:

- ⇒ Transportation from the Area Agency on Aging to sites
- ⇒ Kaw Point Viewing (short walk)
- ⇒ Underground Railroad Museum entry
- ⇒ Lunch at the Vernon Center Congregate Meal Site
- ⇒ Wyandotte County Museum entry



This day trip may require a lot of walking or standing. If you're unable to stand for long periods of time, this particular event may not be for you.

Deadline for reservations is August 10, 2019. To reserve one of the 20 available spaces, stop by the Area Agency on Aging located at 849 North 47th Street and pay the required fee (cash/check only). No reservations can be made by phone.

Should you have questions or concerns regarding the trip, please contact Linda Ramirez at 913-573-8543.

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING CAMPAIGNS TO SEEK MONETARY DONATIONS**

Greetings! The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is currently conducting a campaign to increase awareness of the importance of monetary donations. We administer programs that provide in-home support that may include one or more of the following: Respite, Homemaker, Attendant Care and Meals on Wheels. We even provide lunch for those 60 and over at eight congregate meals sites in our area.

The AAA receives Federal, State and Local (Mill Levy) dollars and while there are no means testing to receive these services, in order to alleviate waiting lists, the program sustainability relies greatly on client contributions. Client contributions are an important part of our funding sources. As funding has remained flat in most of the program incomes, client contributions are down 45%. We would appreciate your consideration to donate to one or more of our programs.

- In-Home Services
- Meals on Wheels
- Newsletter - the Communicator
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Should you wish to donate to one of the programs or have questions regarding this request, please feel free to contact our office at 913-573-8531 or mail a check payable to:

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging  
849 North 47th Street, Suite C  
Kansas City, Kansas 66102

# OLDER AMERICANS MONTH CELEBRATION A SUCCESS!

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging and Disability Resource Center held its annual Sock Hop themed event on May 23, 2019. The event was well attended and over 400 older adults filled the George Meyn Center to capacity.

The event is held in honor of Older Americans Month and is funded solely by its sponsors. This year's celebrity judges for the dance contest were Commissioners Angela Markley and Melissa Bynum, Justus Welker, Director of Unified Government Transit and Edwin Birch, Public Information Officer. We look forward to seeing you all next year!

## 2019 SOCK HOP SPONSORS

### GOLD LEVEL SPONSORS

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- Assisted Transportation
- Best Choice Home Health
- Faith Home Health Care
- Integrity Pharmacy
- Midland Care - PACE
- Providence Place/Carondolet Home Health
- Riverbend Post Acute Rehabilitation
- Sunflower Health Plan
- Treat America
- Unified Government Health Department
- Unified Government Transit Department
- United Health Care

### SILVER LEVEL SPONSORS

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- Audio Reader Network
- Carter Health Care
- Novus Life Care

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THIS YEARS SPONSORS!



## AREA AGENCY ON AGING RECEIVES ACHIEVEMENT & INNOVATION AWARD

It is with great pleasure to announce that the Wyandotte/Leavenworth AAA will be one of the 2019 N4A (National Area Agencies on Aging) Achievement & Innovation Award recipients.

The Area Agency on Aging received this award for the **Dress for Success Program**. The Dress for Success Program provides school uniforms, back packs and school supplies to grandparents who meet the program criteria and are identified through USD 500 as the primary caregiver raising their grandchildren.

N4A (National Association for Area Agencies on Aging) is the association who represents 622 of America's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and provides a voice in the nation's capital.



## PARKINSONS DISEASE - WHAT IS IT?

*Parkinson's Disease is a brain disorder that leads to shaking, stiffness and difficulty with walking, balance and coordination.*

Parkinson's symptoms usually begin gradually and get worse over time. As the disease progresses, people may have difficulty walking and talking. They may also have mental and behavioral changes, sleep problems, depression, memory difficulties and fatigue. Both men and women can have Parkinson's disease. However, the disease affects about 50 percent more men than women.

One clear risk factor for Parkinson's is age. Although most people with Parkinson's first develop the disease at about age 60, about 5 to 10 percent of people with Parkinson's have "early-onset" disease, which occurs before the age of 50.

### What Causes Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's disease occurs when nerve cells, or neurons in an area of the brain that control movement become impaired and/or die. Normally, these neurons produce an important brain chemical known as dopamine. When the neurons die or become impaired, they produce less dopamine, which causes the movement problems of Parkinson's. Scientists still do not know what causes cells that produce dopamine to die.

People with Parkinson's also lose the nerve endings that produce norepinephrine, the main chemical messenger of the sympathetic nervous system which controls many automatic functions of the body, such as heart rate and blood pressure.

The loss of norepinephrine might help explain some of the non-movement features of Parkinson's, such as fatigue, irregular blood pressure, decreased movement of food through the digestive tract and sudden drop in blood pressure when a person stands up from a sitting or lying position.

Although some cases of Parkinson's appear to be hereditary and few can be traced to specific genetic mutations, in most cases the disease occurs randomly and does not seem

to run in families. Many researchers now believe that Parkinson's disease results from a combination of genetic factors and environmental factors such as exposure to toxins.



### Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease has four main symptoms:

- Tremor (trembling) in hands, arms, legs, jaw or head
- Stiffness of the limbs and trunk
- Slowness of movement
- Impaired balance and coordination, sometimes leading to falls

Other symptoms may include depression and other emotional changes; difficulty swallowing, chewing and speaking; urinary problems or constipation; skin problems and sleep disruptions.

Symptoms of Parkinson's and the rate of progression differ among individuals. Sometimes people dismiss early symptoms of Parkinson's as the affects of normal aging. In most cases, there is no medical tests to definitively detect the disease, so it can be difficult to diagnose accurately. Symptoms often begin on one side of the body or even in one limb on one side of the body. As the disease progresses, it eventually affects both sides. However the symptoms may still be more severe on one side than on the other. Many people with Parkinson's note that prior to experiencing stiffness and tremor, they have sleep problems, constipation, decreased ability to smell and restless legs.

### Treatment of Parkinson's Disease

Although there is no cure for Parkinson's disease, medicines, surgical treatment and other therapies can often relieve some symptoms. The main therapy for Parkinson's are of course medications. Medications make dopamine to replenish the brain's dwindling supply. Those drugs may cause nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure and restlessness. Other treatments include a surgical procedure that surgically implants electrodes into part of the brain and connects

them to a small electrical device implanted in the chest. The device and electrodes painlessly stimulate the brain in a way that helps stop many of the movement-related symptoms of Parkinson's, such as tremors and slowness of movement and rigidity. Other therapies may also be used to help with Parkinson's disease symptoms. They include physical, occupational and speech therapies which help with gait and voice disorders, tremors and rigidity and decline in mental functions.

You may find out more information and assistance about Parkinson's Disease by contacting the following organizations:

#### Parkinson's Foundation

1-800-473-4636  
helpline@parkinson.org  
[www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org)

#### National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

1-800-352-9424  
braininfo@ninds.nih.gov  
[www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)

#### Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

1-800-708-7644  
[www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org)

## FUN ACTIVITIES FOR SENIORS: WHY PLAY IS IMPORTANT

Information provided by: [www.seniorliving.com](http://www.seniorliving.com)

As we age, it's sometimes easy to forget how much fun life can really be, regardless of our age. Joyful pursuits are what make us feel truly alive, engaged, and connected. The world becomes more vibrant and inviting when we give ourselves permission to play. That's why it's such a good idea to explore all kinds of different options for having fun. Every senior deserves to pursue enjoyable pastimes that make him or her laugh, lose track of time, or feel like a goofy kid at heart. Plus, many of the best activities for senior citizens cost little or no money. For example, being silly just for the sake of it doesn't have to cost a single penny. So, discover why it's important to have more fun, and explore ideas or how to go about doing exactly that. This article will show you why it's perfectly normal—and necessary to love playing and having fun as an older adult.

### What Is Fun Anyway?

That may seem like an odd or very basic question, but it's worth taking seriously. Besides, *fun* might be a little harder to define than you think. We all have our own ideas about what is fun or pleasurable. The kinds of experiences that create the feelings we think of as fun are extremely diverse and wide-ranging. No two people share exactly the same responses to every type of experience.

Even so, it's important to maintain a helpful awareness of the general concept, especially if you're a senior. Fun shouldn't be ignored by anybody. You're never too old to benefit from it.

So, what's the best way to define *fun*? Maybe we should think of it this way: Fun is

the intense enjoyment you feel when doing a voluntary activity that offers a consuming sense of positive engagement. Fun lightens your heart.

### Why Is Play Important for Seniors?

Here's where the subject of fun and play gets interesting. You get to decide what's fun for you. Even if you can't be as active as you want because of a disability or advancing age, you can still find plenty of opportunities for playing and having fun. And many activities (even physical ones) can be



adapted to accommodate your particular capabilities. So, pay attention to your heart. Keep doing anything that makes it feel lighter and causes you to smile.

Explore the following activity ideas for some inspiration:

A lot of fun games for senior citizens may involve physical activity. They give you the opportunity to get some exercise, improve your hand-eye coordination, and feel a

sense of control over the physical world. As long as the weather is good, being outside can-do wonders for a person's mood. After all, the natural world is full of pleasurable sights, sounds, smells, and other sensory delights. That's why many activities in the great outdoors are so fun. They let you feel like an explorer or like you're connected to something larger than yourself. Consider activities such as gardening, walking, bird-watching or picnics.

Board games and card games provide great ways to socialize and benefit from the joyful challenges of friendly competition.

Do you remember how fun and freeing it felt to channel your energy and creativity into making something new? Your imagination probably came alive as more and more new ideas streamed into your mind. So why not recapture some of those same feelings by playing with various arts and crafts? These kinds of creative recreational pursuits are great for people of all ages, and they often make terrific elderly activities.

Learning is always more fun when it's something you choose to do for its own sake. Whole new avenues of possibility reveal themselves. As a result, you can experience a lot of playful optimism, which builds on itself and leads to more new discoveries and opportunities for exploration. So, follow your curiosity and impulses. You're never too old to learn something new.

With so many great activities for seniors to choose from, it would be silly not to play as often as possible. So, get back in touch with your child-like qualities and start celebrating them. Having fun is simply too important to ignore. You deserve to smile!

## CHAMPSS PILOT TO BEGIN - Choosing Healthy Appetizing Meal Plan Solutions for Seniors



An informational meeting was held for those interested in the CHAMPSS Program coming to Wyandotte County. The Pilot program is scheduled to launch July 1, 2019. CHAMPSS is dependent on donations from its participants and allows seniors to visit participating stores/restaurants at their convenience for a healthy, well-balanced meal.

If you are interested in joining the program, please contact the Nutrition Department at 913-573-8546 for more information.

### MARINATED CUCUMBER SALAD

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 3 medium cucumbers, peeled and sliced (1/4")
- 1 medium red onion, sliced
- 3 medium tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil



**DIRECTIONS:**

1. In a large bowl, whisk together water, vinegar, oil, sugar, salt and pepper.
2. Add cucumbers, tomatoes and red onion. Gently toss to coat.
3. Cover bowl and refrigerate at least 2 hours. To serve, use a slotted spoon to scoop out vegetables. Serve cold.

### BRING ON THE FUN

*Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.*

- AIR CONDITIONING
- BACKPACK
- BACK TO SCHOOL
- BALD EAGLE
- BASEBALL
- BEACH BALL
- BOOM
- BOTTLE ROCKETS
- CAR WASH
- CYCLING
- CONSTITUTION
- COOK OUTS
- DAY TRIP
- DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
- DRESS FOR SUCCESS
- FAMILY REUNION
- FIREFLIES
- FIREWORKS
- FISHING
- FOUNDING FATHERS
- FOUNTAINS
- FOURTH OF JULY
- GARAGE SALE
- MOSQUITOS
- OLD GLORY
- RED WHITE BLUE
- SANDALS
- SCHOOL SUPPLIES
- SENIOR CITIZENS DAY
- STARS AND STRIPES
- SUMMER
- SUNGLASSES
- TOMATOES
- TORNADO
- WATERMELON

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## Wyandotte/Leavenworth

### Area Agency on Aging

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Kansas City, Kansas 66102

Phone: 913-573-8531

Fax: 913-573-8577

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## JULY >>>

### INDEPENDENCE DAY

*Thursday, July 4, 2019*

*Unified Government Offices Closed*

### PARENT'S DAY

*Sunday, July 28, 2019*



The Communicator is published bi-monthly by the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging. It is funded by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services through the Older Americans' Act. We assume no responsibility for the care and return of unsolicited material. Donations are suggested.

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**

**Emma Fonseca, Contributing Editor**

## AUGUST >>>

### NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZENS DAY

*Wednesday, August 21, 2019*

**Day Trip Scheduled - Details inside  
this edition of the newsletter**

