

THE COMMUNICATOR

A WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING PUBLICATION

Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

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SPRINGTIME ACTIVITIES FOR SENIORS

There is just something so rejuvenating about spring. Whether it's the birds chirping, flowers or sunshine, spring does wonders for the senior soul. Springtime is a favorite season for seniors because so many of us are retired and have spent the winter being cooped-up indoors. There is nothing like breathing fresh air, feeling the warmth of the sun on the skin and soaking up a little Vitamin D to renew the spirit and enhance our quality of life.

Taking some time to partake in a springtime activity can help to not only improve cognitive function, but happiness as well. Even if mobility is a problem, you can choose adventures and venues that cater to the handicap and are wheelchair accessible.

Here are a few favorite springtime activities for seniors that are good for the soul:

Choose a local park or nature trail for walks. Many landmarks, local parks and even nature trails are appropriate for seniors (and are wheelchair accessible). Do a little research ahead of time to find out what outdoor nature destination is a good choice for you or senior loved one.

Eat outdoors at a fancy restaurant. Good company, food and a fancy ambiance are all a recipe for success. Satisfy your palate and take time for some quality bonding.

Enjoy tourist attractions. Whether it's local landmarks, historical sites or sporting events, tourist attractions are good for the mind and for combating cabin fever. Let your senior choose their destination.

Go fishing. If both you and an elderly loved one are mobile, you can venture to many fishing spots, but even those who are wheelchair bound can cast from a pier or bridge over a creek or river. Peruse your area for the perfect fishing spot.

Go on a picnic. Pack a delicious lunch with a comfortable blanket and enjoy the outdoors, picnic style. You can bring binoculars for bird watching, books to read or cards for some outdoor game fun.

Go see a show. Whether a local theatre production or a fancy opera; getting dressed up and having a fun evening watching a show adds not only a little fun to senior-life, but also some culture.

Invest in a bird feeder for bird watching. Birds provide beautiful visuals and entertainment, and springtime bird chirping signals the opportune time to invest in a feeder. Whether blue jays or hummingbirds, bird feeders attract nature to your yard. You and your elder can even build your own for a little extra fun.

Partake in spring cleaning. When there's light outside coming in through the windows, clutter and dust are suddenly visible. It's always healthy to do a little spring cleaning to create a comfortable ambiance. You might even want to put up a spring wreath and other fresh decorations.

Visit a farmers market. There's nothing like fresh fruits, vegetables and local arts and crafts to inspire elders. Getting out into the fresh air with other adults, children and often pets is also beneficial for seniors.



In this issue:

- HOMESTEAD/SAFESR PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
- FREE LOW INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE
- WIDOWHOOD IN AMERICA – SURVIVING EMOTIONALLY
- SUPPORT FOR YOUR LOVED ONE WITH MEMORY LOSS
- 2019 PUBLIC HEARINGS
- SOCK HOP - SAVE THE DATE
- ARGENTINE MEAL SITE GRAND RE-OPENING
- THREE SENIOR SCAMS TO AVOID
- NEW PILOT NUTRITION PROGRAM MAY BE COMING TO WYANDOTTE COUNTY
- MEDICARE MYTHS

KANSAS HOMESTEAD/SAFESR-PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR LOW INCOME SENIORS

The **Homestead Refund** is a rebate program for the property taxes paid by homeowners. The refund is based on a portion of the property tax paid on a Kansas resident's home. The maximum refund is \$700.

To qualify, you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your total household income must be \$35,000 or less. You must meet one of the following requirements:

- You were born before Jan.1, 1963
- You must have been totally or permanently disabled or blind during the entire year, regardless of your age; OR
- You must have had a dependent child living with you all of last year who was born before Jan. 1, 2018 and was under the age of 18 the entire year.

SAFESR is a property tax refund program administered under the provisions of the Kansas Homestead Act (property tax refund). SAFESR is also referred to as, "Kansas Property Tax Relief for Low Income Seniors".

The refund is 75% of the general property tax paid or to be paid as shown on the 2018 real estate tax statement for the residence in which the claimant lived in 2018. The 2018 property tax consists of the 1st half which is due December 20, 2018 and the 2nd half which is due May 10, 2019. The 2018 property tax is the total of both the 1st and 2nd half taxes.

A claimant may receive either a Homestead or SAFESR refund by not both.

You must meet all the following requirements for the SAFESR refund.

- Kansas resident all of 2018,
- Owned a home in Kansas during 2018,
- Aged 65 years or older for all of 2018 (born before January 1, 1953) and
- Household income of \$19,800 or less in 2018, and
- House cannot be valued at more than \$350,000.

FREE LOW INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

The following information is offered as a courtesy. All questions or concerns regarding the locations, times of service or filing requirements should be directed to the participation organization.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers free, individualized tax preparation for low to moderate income taxpayers especially those 50 and older. To the right, you can view sites in the Wyandotte County area.

Should you need information regarding the AARP Tax Assistance Program, please contact AARP at 1-866-389-5627.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$54,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. www.irs.gov.



VITA TAX SITES

El Centro, Inc.
2006 North 3rd Street, KCK 66101
Tuesdays (9:30am - 4:30p)
Saturdays (9a - 2p)
913-730-0677

KCKCC - Flint Bldg. Rm 3632
7250 State Avenue, KCK 66112
Wednesdays (5p - 8p)
Saturdays (9a - 12p)
913-288-7644

Catholic Charities
2301 Central, KCK 66102
Drop Off Only

AARP TAX SITES

KCK City Hall
701 North 7th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
Mondays (9am - 2pm)

KCKCC
7250 State Avenue
Jewell Bldg.-Upper level-Student lounge
Kansas City, Kansas 66112
Tuesdays & Thursdays
9am - 1pm

Turner Rec Center
831 S. 55th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66106
Thursdays by appointment only (9am - 2pm)
913-295-8250 - Option #4

Providence/Ball YMCA
8601 Parallel Pkwy.
Kansas City, Kansas 66112
Wednesdays & Fridays
By appointment only
12p - 4pm
913-378-9622



WIDOWHOOD IN AMERICA - SURVIVING EMOTIONALLY

Few things in life are more stressful than the loss of a spouse. Becoming a widow or widower can lead to depression and chronic stress that shortens lifespans. Loneliness can be particularly strong in bereaved seniors, activating depressive symptoms. This downward spiral can be hard to stop.

Loneliness and depression in seniors who have lost a spouse can lead to major health risks, including suicide. Risky behavior such as smoking drug or alcohol abuse, failure to care for themselves or becoming inactive may increase. The risk of dementia also rises.

Not everyone needs intervention. There are many differences in individual loss, such as whether it was sudden or occurred over many years. However, professionals may be able to predict the surviving spouse's response based on the relationship the spouses had. Research shows that a widow who was highly dependent on her spouse is more likely to develop problems with anxiety after that person's death. Strong closeness during a marriage often leads to greater loneliness for the surviving spouse.

People who haven't lost a spouse may never understand the depth or duration of the loss. They may try to cheer up the widow, or make it better. That's completely normal, but widows say there are aspects to their loss they wish others could understand.

Socializing becomes more difficult. Going out to dinner, taking a vacation and seeing a movie were all things they used to do with their spouse. Some will adapt to doing these things on their own, but it's not the same. Friends may invite a widow to a party, thinking the big group will be inviting, but if it's mostly couples, the awkward feeling is still there. Worse yet, the widow may find herself shut out of social situations by friends who worry they will feel out of place.

Every part of a widow's day is changed from what it was and the nighttime routine may be particularly missed. Household chores, making plans, sharing finances all of these must be done alone. The weight of planning and organizing life alone can be nearly unbearable. Even sleeping alone can feel strange.

Some people will feel uncomfortable around you now that you're no longer part of a couple. Others will criticize how you handle your new status. Keep the following tips in mind as you move forward as a widow or widower:

Learn to let go. If people you thought of as friends are not being supportive now, let go. If they are not going to be part of your healing process, they don't get the privilege of being a part of your life.

Respect the different loss perspectives. Your true friends and family will always be there for you, but they'll be able to move on with their lives a lot sooner than you. You can't reasonably expect them to grieve as long as you do or in the same way.

Get proactive. People you love may want to give you space and time to begin healing. They may not want to "bother" you with phone calls and visits. If you're ready for quiet socializing, pick up the phone and let others know.

Fear not. Many people will be afraid to talk about your loss or fear upsetting you, just when you need to talk about it most. You may need to put them at ease. If you're ready to talk about your spouse, bring their name into the conversation. Tell a funny story. People will take their cue from you.

Embrace who you have become. The experience of widowhood changes you forever. While the circumstances are tragic, you'll grow through it and find the strength and tenacity that people

may have never known you had. Take pride and comfort in that knowledge. The real story here may lie in the search for the ways in which widows and widowers manage to cope with the loss of their spouse and adjust to the new realities they must face.



SUPPORT FOR BOTH YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONE WITH MEMORY LOSS

RDAD-KC is an in-home support program that works with caregivers of individuals who have moderate to severe dementia or intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Benefits for individuals with dementia or disabilities:

- ⇒ Decreased stress and anxiety
- ⇒ Enhanced mood and communication
- ⇒ Improved levels of health activity

Benefits for caregivers:

- ⇒ Expert dementia care training
- ⇒ Regular support meetings
- ⇒ Develop new techniques to promote health activity

For more information about the RDAD-KC Program, contact Mellissa Currie, WY/LV ADRC at 913-573-8531.

2019 PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED

The Public Hearings are a great opportunity for the public to learn about programs and/or provide feedback regarding senior services in Wyandotte and Leavenworth Counties.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Public Hearing, please feel free to contact the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging at 913-573-8531.

March 21, 2019

10am

Victory Hills Senior Living Ctr.
1900 North 70th
Kansas City, Kansas 66112

April 18, 2019

10am

Bonner Springs Senior Center
200 East 3rd Street
Bonner Springs, Kansas 66012



April 21, 2019, 2019

1pm

Leavenworth Council on Aging
1830 S. Broadway
Leavenworth, Kansas 66048

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for our annual Older Americans Month Celebration. The Sock Hop will be held at the George Meyn Community Center located inside Wyandotte County Park. The park address is 12600 State Ave. Kansas City, Kansas.



- Health Screenings
- Concessions
- Entertainment
- Informational Booths
- Door Prizes
- Dance Contest

Thursday, May 23, 2019

11a - 2p

**George Meyn Center
12600 State Avenue
Kansas City, Kansas**

GRAND *Re* OPENING!



**Joe Amayo/Argentine
Community Center
Meal Site**

2810 Metropolitan, KCK 66106

Friday, March 29, 2019

11:30am

- NUTRITIOUS MEALS
- DRAWINGS
- DOOR PRIZES
- SOCIALIZATION

YOU MUST BE 60 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER TO ATTEND.

Call the Area Agency on Aging to reserve your meal by Monday, March 25, 2019 at 913-573-8568.

THREE SENIOR SCAMS TO AVOID IN 2019

There's been a significant uptick in fraudulent telephone calls from people claiming to represent the Social Security Administration (SSA). In them, unknown callers threaten victims that they face arrest or other legal action if they fail to call a provided phone number or press the number indicated in the message to address the issue. Sometimes the scammers switch tactics and say that they want to help an individual activate a suspended Social Security number. They may even "spoof" the actual Social Security hotline number to appear on the recipient's phone, 1-800-772-1213. If you receive one of these calls, hang up. Know that Social Security rarely contacts persons by phone unless you have ongoing business with them and they never make threats about arrest or legal action.

Report suspicious calls to the SSA Office of the Inspector General by dialing 1-800-269-0271.

The grandparent scam has been around for several years. In this approach, a person calls an older adult pretending to be a grandchild who's been involved in an accident or legal trouble and needs money immediately. Recently, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) found that instead of using wire transfer or gift cards, an increas-

ing number of older adults are mailing cash to these scammers. According to reports, the scammers often ask seniors to divide the bills into envelopes and place them between the pages of magazine, then send them using vari-



ous carriers, including UPS, FedEx and the US Postal Service.

If you or a loved one receives one of these calls, don't act right away. Call the grandchild back on a correct phone number and verify their whereabouts. If you've mailed cash, report it right away to the Postal Service or shipping company you used. Some people have been able to stop delivery by acting quickly and giving a tracking number. Be sure to also file a complaint to the FTC at FTC.gov/complaint or by dialing 1-877-382-4357.

Wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes - these unpredictable forces of nature can be devastating to those living in affected areas. Even those not directly affected may want to lend support in whatever way they can. Unfortunately, natural disasters are a golden opportunity for scammers, who target both those who've been directly affected and those who want to offer their support. Natural disaster scams typically start with unsolicited contact by telephone, social media, email or in person. Scammer may:

- Impersonate charities to get money or private information from well-meaning consumers
- Set up fake websites with names that mimic legitimate charities to trick people into sending money.
- Present to be from the IRS and collect personal information under the guise of helping victims file loss claims and get tax refunds.

Keep in mind, the best advice to avoid being scammed is to hang up with the caller and investigate, investigate, investigate. If something smells fishy, it probably is. A good rule of thumb is that if you did not seek out the information, don't respond.

CONSIDER DONATING TO THE MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM

The WY/LV Area Agency on Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) urges state taxpayers to remember older adults in Kansas when they file their state income tax returns.

The Senior Citizens' Meals on Wheels Contribution is a check off found on Kansas income tax forms that allows taxpayers the opportunity to donate to the Meals on Wheels Program. All contributions are used solely for the purpose of providing Meals on Wheels to the elderly homebound in our community.

Please consider this option when filing your 2018 taxes. If you have and questions regarding the donation, feel free to contact the ADRC at 913-573-8531.



NEW PILOT NUTRITION PROGRAM MAY BE COMING TO WYANDOTTE COUNTY

The Wyandotte /Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging is looking into bringing a new nutrition program to Wyandotte County. The CHAMPSS Program (*Choosing Healthy Appetizing Meal Plan Solutions for Seniors*) is already available in many areas across the state of Kansas.

The program targets mobile seniors, 60 years of age or older who have access to transportation. It provides nutritious meals that consist of an entrée, fruit, vegetable bread and low-fat milk. Participants would pick up the meal, at their convenience, at the participating grocery store or restaurant.

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging is looking for feedback from interested seniors in our community. Would you be interested?

If you would like to get more information about the program or give your feedback, please contact Jacqui Watts at 913-573-8531.

MEDICARE MYTHS

Maybe you're looking forward to freeing yourself from private health insurance premiums when you become eligible for Medicare at age 65. Or, perhaps you already have Medicare and assume that all your healthcare costs are covered, even in-home care and long-term care costs.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of misconceptions that could cost you big money in expenses, medical bills and prescriptions because you lack adequate coverage, even if you are enrolled in Medicare.

The biggest myth out there is that all people need is Medicare. Many people think that the government will take care of them, not only in the short run but in the long run too. Then they miss other items they might need, like a Medicare supplement or prescription drug plan, which help provide a good foundation but aren't designed to pay for long-term care expenses.

You probably need more than Medicare Part A, which is free for most people at age 65 if they or a spouse paid into Medicare long enough while working. Did you know, however, that there are four parts to this federal health insurance and they're not all premium free?



Many people think that Medicare Part A covers nearly everything regarding hospitalization. That's not true! Part A comes with a deductible of more than \$1000 and mostly just covers your room. Doctors, surgeons, testing and many other fees are covered under Part B and accompanied by coinsurance.

Don't count on Medicare when it comes to long-term in-home care. Medicare doesn't cover non-medical, personal services and covers only in-home care ordered by a doctor such as skilled care from a nurse, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech therapist or social worker. However, Medicare covers skilled in-home care ordered by a doctor for up to only 21 days. For days 21-100, Medicare pays a portion and the beneficiary is responsible for the leftover amount of about \$170 per day. However, you can purchase a Medigap insurance policy through a private insurance broker to cover that difference.

Many people believe that long-term care is always covered by Medicare, again, long-term care is not a covered benefit by Medicare. You should consult with a Medicare Counselor during open enrollment to discuss your needs and save yourself the sticker shock associated with long-term health care costs.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME IS SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2019

Daylight Savings Time in the United States starts on the second Sunday in March of each year and ends the first Sunday in November.

It goes into effect each spring when clocks are moved forward by one hour at 2:00am standard time, and the time becomes 3:00am daylight savings time (DST). When DST ends in the fall, the clock is moved back at 2am and the time becomes 1:00am standard time.

Hence the saying, "Spring Forward, Fall Back!"



AMERICAN STROKE FOUNDATION DONTES VALENTINE DAY CARDS TO HOMEBOUND SENIORS

Thank you to the American Stroke Foundation for providing homemade valentine cards for our homebound seniors in the community. The valentines were distributed to Meals on Wheels participants in Wyandotte County on Valentines Day.

Thank you to the American Stroke Foundation!

TOMATO BASIL SALMON

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 (6 ounce) boneless salmon fillets
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tomato (thinly sliced)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with a piece of aluminum foil, and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Place the salmon fillets onto the foil, sprinkle with basil, top with tomato slices, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
2. Bake in the preheated oven until the salmon is opaque in the center and the Parmesan cheese is lightly browned on top, about 20 minutes.

TIP: Aluminum foil helps keep food moist, ensures it cooks evenly, keeps leftovers fresh and makes clean-up easy.



- APRIL FOOLS DAY
- BASEBALL
- BASKET
- BEER
- BLARNEY STONE
- BONNET
- CABBAGE
- CORNED BEEF
- DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
- EASTER
- EGG HUNT
- FORT LAUDERDALE
- GARDENING
- GOOD FRIDAY
- GREEN
- HAM
- IRISH
- KITES
- LENT
- LEPRECHAUN
- LILLIES
- MARDI GRAS
- PARADE
- PATRICKS DAY
- PATRIOTS DAY
- PEEPS
- POT OF GOLD
- RAINBOW
- SHAMROCKS
- SHOWERS
- SPRING BREAK
- TAXES
- UNCLE SAM
- WIND CHIMES
- WINDY

SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

H	K	A	E	R	B	G	N	I	R	P	S	W	N	G	L	T	E	Y	Q	C	Y	M	R	S
H	T	P	P	S	R	E	W	O	H	S	E	U	D	L	O	G	F	O	T	O	P	A	E	Y
U	W	N	C	R	B	R	T	G	H	C	A	D	A	S	K	J	G	D	Z	K	A	I	D	I
C	G	H	O	I	I	S	J	L	O	H	R	B	A	N	S	I	N	L	X	M	L	N	D	N
A	V	M	A	M	K	L	E	X	C	O	E	M	P	R	R	F	I	E	B	I	I	Q	L	X
B	N	R	N	P	S	G	F	E	B	S	D	M	Z	I	A	L	N	G	L	W	W	F	T	R
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D	H	A	E	X	K	L	C	Z	A	L	F	E	K	Y	N	C	K	H	T	S	L	W	P	N
S	M	Q	I	S	A	K	W	S	C	O	R	N	E	D	B	E	E	F	O	A	B	Y	F	S
T	N	B	D	N	S	T	T	W	A	U	N	C	L	E	S	A	M	K	N	E	K	R	Q	P
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I	Y	A	U	N	G	O	J	N	V	P	G	Z	E	E	N	U	M	O	Q	Q	P	Q	N	E
R	Y	B	H	I	N	U	W	D	X	E	D	I	U	M	U	H	M	X	F	I	Q	Z	Q	P
T	J	C	L	F	L	E	Q	C	M	S	E	D	D	E	M	M	N	I	F	H	O	G	V	L
A	E	Y	E	U	L	O	T	H	B	J	L	V	S	R	C	L	L	F	U	Z	M	P	L	S
P	A	K	R	S	N	D	F	I	B	A	S	K	E	T	A	L	V	A	G	K	A	N	W	M
D	F	T	Y	A	I	N	M	M	G	J	M	U	H	V	P	M	E	D	O	X	Y	Z	U	J
M	U	G	E	O	H	T	D	E	C	T	P	J	Z	N	Z	S	E	I	L	L	I	L	B	W
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Y	N	J	A	K	I	R	Y	H	X	R	G	R	A	O	Y	V	D	B	I	G	O	W	A	G

Wyandotte/Leavenworth

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DisABLED or 60PLUS?...Call on Us!

PRESORTED STANDARD

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

KANSAS CITY, MO

PERMIT NO. 6412

NOVEMBER >>>

DALIGHT SAVINGS

Sunday, March 10, 2019

ST. PATRICKS DAY

Sunday March 17, 2019



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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

Emma Fonseca, Contributing Editor

DECEMBER >>>

APRIL FOOLS DAY

Monday, April 1, 2019

SPRING HOLIDAY

Friday, April 19, 2019
Unified Government Offices Closed

EASTER

Sunday, April 21, 2019