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New Horizons

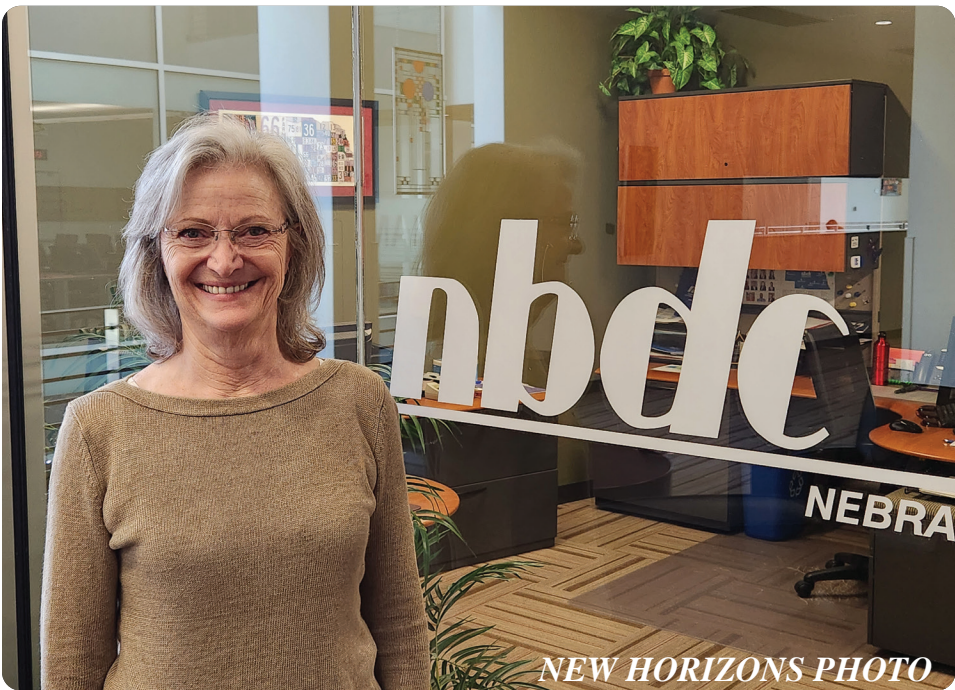
NBDC executive director opens doors to entrepreneurs and business owners

By Nick Shinker
Contributing Writer

When Catherine Lang took the job as Nebraska's Commissioner of Labor in 2008, she couldn't get into her office. The door was locked. So were all the cabinets inside the office.

"The first thing I was given was a set of keys," she recalls. "The next thing I did was unlock the door and all the cabinets, and I left them that way. Not only was my door always open, I got out of that office and walked around. I got to know the people and what they did in their jobs. My leadership style was quite different. And it worked."

Today, as the executive director of the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Lang opens the door to entrepreneurs and small business owners across the state. She and her team of consultants and support staff are instru-



NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

mental in advancing the NBDC mission to help grow the state's economy.

She will step down from that role in January after seven years as NBDC's leader. But she won't

be officially retiring. She still has work to do as the Senior Advisor to the President of the University (of Nebraska) for Economic Development and as the President of the University Technology Develop-

ment Corporation (UTDC).

As his senior advisor, Lang informs NU System President Ted Carter on ways the university can expand economic opportunity and prosperity in Nebraska through talent development, innovative research and technology, and community engagement.

Lang speaks with the voice of experience. Prior to leading the NBDC, she served the State of Nebraska for nearly 33 years. A string of Nebraska governors appointed her to an impressive list of leadership roles including Director of the Department of Economic Development, Commissioner of Labor, the state's first-ever Property Tax Administrator, and Deputy Tax Commissioner.

The challenges she has faced throughout her career have been many, including those who doubted her abilities. She eventually made

--Lang continued on page 8.



2023 ENOA's Spirit of Aging Awards



This year, as part of its celebration of Older Americans Month, the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging has presented its third annual *Spirit of Aging Awards*. Winners were selected in the **Advocacy**, **Medical/Healthcare**, **Donor**, and **Volunteer** categories. See article on page 9.

Thanks to each of the winners from the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, its staff, and the men and women the agency serves in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties.



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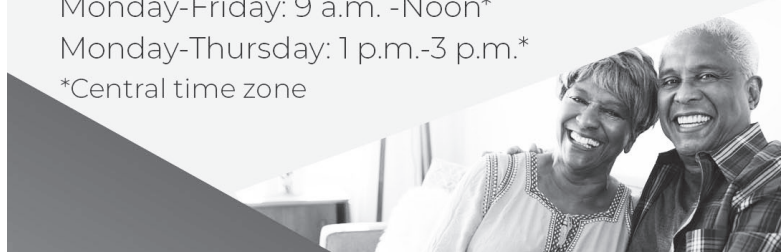
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Moving sounds awful to me

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working for you anymore. Do you modify the house? Do you move? Do you quit doing things you love to do in the house? The answer isn’t always clear, and each option has a cost. The conversation can go on and

Phillips on for years.

Barb and Bill Mazurak met just twenty seven years ago. Barb explained that they are opposites. She’s the talker and he’s the quiet one who slips in the funny line when you don’t expect it.

They moved into their current home ten years ago. You can see the love they have for their home in the way they speak about all the sunlight and its open feeling and in what Barb, an avid gardener has done in the yard to have beautiful views during all the seasons. They have put as much in place to be able to enjoy their home as long as possible. Barb was emphatic.

“I will do almost anything to stay here. Moving sounds awful to me, but you do have to look at how much things cost,” she said.

Bill has Parkinson’s Disease which has impacted his legs and created a health situation in which he has rather sudden changes in strength and balance. They struggled to decide whether they could make their split entry home work for them or if a move to another home would be more cost effective and safer. Conversations went on over several years while Bill’s falls became more frequent and his trouble getting in and out of the home became more of a problem.

Bill didn’t worry about the stairs as much as Barb did, but they really worried her. Those 14 steps of the split entry home started to seem insurmountable. Gradually Bill started going places less and less. They had heard about stairglides and started talking about them about five years ago. Barb shook her head with chagrin as she talked about how long they spent talking about it.

One point of concern with the option of a stairglide in a split entry home and living in the home in general was cost. It was hard for them to look into the future and decide whether moving sooner than later or investing in equipment in order to stay in place was more financially sound for them. Barb thought that the stairglide for a split entry house was so far out of their price range that she put off calling any dealers. Finding a way in and out of their split entry home remained an issue.

They found equipment to manage helping Bill get up from the floor and in and out of an easy chair during the times he was weakest. They used the local company 101 Mobility for items that needed installation like the grab bars in the bathroom. They were pleased that Tom from 101 Mobility came up with small threshold ramp that allowed Bill to move through the back door using his walker so that they could continue to enjoy their lovely deck and backyard together.

After deciding something absolutely had to be done about the stairs in order to settle the decision about staying or moving



PHILLIPS PHOTO

Bill and Barb Mazurak will do “almost anything” to stay in their current home, even if that means they have to invest in stairglides.

once and for all, Barb made a call to Tom and asked for options. Stairglides that have curves in them are custom made and are the most expensive option among stairglides for indoor use. The foyer and door placement of many split entry homes sometimes don’t provide enough room for a stairglide track to curve one hundred and eighty degrees between the upper staircase and the lower staircase. That modification would add to the cost.

A custom, curved stairglide and any home modifications that might need to be done could still be an answer for some people as they compare preferences and costs between moving to a new home or staying put. A big consideration is the impact that changes in abilities would have on using the stairglide or the rest of the home. Since Bill can get on and off the stairglide chairs and move a few feet with support now, Tom was able to offer a cost-effective solution.

Barb and Bill had two straight track stairglides installed. Two new straight tracks cost less than one track with a curve in it. Tom also had one used stairglide to pair with a new one which put the project within the budget the couple was comfortable with. Bill enters the home from the garage and rides a stairglide to the front foyer. There he carefully moves from that stairglide to the one that goes up to the main floor.

Barb said that she is glad that they’ve been able to take the idea of moving and “tuck it away” for now.

“I wish I’d done this two or three years ago. Bill didn’t worry about it as much as I did, but he did have to participate in the back and forth about moving for years,” she said.

Bill, wise but silent man that he is, just nodded and smiled. Asking questions and having those brave conversations about the cost and benefit of equipment and modifications allowed this loving couple to stay together in a home they love together.

If you have a success story to share or want additional information about specific solutions mentioned in this article, feel free to reach BevVan Phillips at bphillipsotr@gmail.com. BevVan Phillips is an Occupational Therapist with over 35 years experience helping people with home modifications and assistive technology.

Talking home downsizing with several older adults

Last month I had the opportunity to share Home Downsizing information with a group that meet at the St. Martin de Porres Center in Omaha that call themselves the Sazzy Seniors.

We had a great question and answer event that I think was informative and



Soucek

educational for those attending. I'd like to discuss a few of the topics we discussed that I think would be beneficial for the readers of this column.

First, and a topic I hear often is, "I want to stay in my house, but want to downsize the 'stuff' that I've accumulated over the years."

Although I don't consider myself a 'stuff downsizing' expert, I did provide some basic tips, to start in rooms that may not be used or used very little, to label and sort items into categories of want to keep, don't want, and maybe want to keep. Just starting and making progress, no matter how small, will provide the motivation to make what may seem like a huge project manageable.

We also discussed how selling a house and downsizing is very dependent on a person's individual wants, needs, and desires. It is said that approx. 90% of senior home owners want to stay in their house as long as possible. It's understandable that a person would like to stay in their house that they are comfortable in.

Some reasons that a person may want to move to a smaller house or apartment are; they don't want the responsibility of repairs, upkeep or maintenance any longer. Would like to travel more and not worry about a vacant house. Would like to move closer to friends or family. Would like more

socialization with others and be involved with a community than they currently are.

One statement was mentioned that I also hear often is, "My house is paid for, and if I move to an apartment, it will actually cost me much more than if I stay in my house."

Again, this is an issue where an individual's specific situation will determine what is best.

If a person is able or has the financial ability to hire items such as yard work, snow removal, repairs, and regular maintenance, then staying in your house may be the best option.

However, if the house is becoming a financial drain because of repairs and maintenance issues, or a person wants the freedom to travel and not worry about a vacant house, or just wants to be in an environment that is more socially active, then moving to an apartment community may be a better option.

Options such as just staying in your house as you currently are, utilizing a reverse mortgage to stay in your house, sell your house and move to a new home, apartment, apartment community or other senior living arrangement, sell your house and move in with family, or possibly selling your house to an investment company, but having an arrangement to stay in your house without the worry of repairs or maintenance issues.

Another common question I hear from sellers is, "How much will I get if I sell the house?"

I provided a couple of different perspectives for this question. If I have my, "Real estate agent hat" on, I may be more optimistic on pricing a house versus if I have my "home buyer hat" on. Although great agents want to provide the best information for sellers, it's easier to be a little more optimistic on pricing than as a home

buyer that is risking their own capital and credit.

Also, agents tend to talk with, "gross" numbers, pricing that they would List a house for instead of, "net" numbers, which is the actual amount a seller will "net" when a sale closes. When discussing the sale of your house, always understand the difference between, "gross vs. net" and how a real estate professional arrives at those numbers.

Lastly, we discussed finding a good, professional real estate agent or home buying company.

In regards to an agent, I would typically recommend one that has an SRES (Seniors Real Estate Specialist) designation or that has worked with seniors and downsizing situations for years with great reviews, as a good start. Having an agent that is familiar with your neighborhood and understands and presents the options you have as a seller is also important. A type of agent I like to refer to as a "Total Solutions Agent."

For home buyers, having a company with a local presence that can actually meet with you and look at your house, been in business for 10+ years (25+ is better), can prove they can actually pay cash for houses (that you can confirm with a title and closing company), and that is able to be open and honest with you is a necessity.

Selling a house, or not, and downsizing can be a stressful process. But with the right information and resources, it doesn't have to be.

Ben Soucek is the author of the book Home Downsizing Secrets, and owner and founder of Home Downsizing Solutions, a company that specializes in helping home owners transition from their current house to a new home, apartment, or other senior living community for more than 25 years.

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Omaha Visitor Center ambassadors exude friendly Midwestern hospitality

By Andy Bradley
Contributing Writer

This year, more than 13 million visitors will frequent Omaha-area hotels, restaurants, attractions, and events, according to Visit Omaha, the official tourism authority for the city of Omaha and Douglas County. That includes the ten of thousands who descended upon the metro area last month for the Berkshire Hathaway shareholder meeting and this month's College World Series, the region's biggest multi-day event. In total, more than 2,000 other events, including concerts, festivals, fairs and conventions, will be staged in Omaha in 2023.

Some of these visitors will pursue a more in-depth orientation to the community and its features and make their way to the Omaha Visitor Center, located just north of the Old Market on 10th Street, between Farnam and Harney (306 S. 10th St). Greeting those visitors with a broad smile and a friendly voice will be one of the city's 75 volunteer ambassadors, four out of five of whom are seniors.

These purveyors of hospitality



Experienced ambassadors Jesse Ugalde (left), Ken Schlueter (middle) and Chris Olsen are ready to greet guests at the remodeled Omaha Visitor Center, 306 S. 10th St.

assisted 43,000 visitors last year at the 10th Street welcome center and at Eppley Airfield. They help guests orient to the area, including how to navigate its streets, neighborhoods, and public transportation. The ambassadors suggest entertain-

ment districts, stores, museums and attractions to explore, as well as restaurants and night life to experience. Some even occasionally help distribute information, guidance and suggestions during large area conventions and other gatherings,

such as the recent Scooter's Coffee convention and the FEI World Cup at CHI. A particularly popular and engaging activity is answering questions from patrons while strolling through the new Gene Leahy Mall.

"Visitors are looking for guidance and recommendations on things to do," said Shannon Wiig, the director of visitor services, "whether they're here for a quick weekend trip or a weeklong vacation."

Travelers today typically navigate their surroundings via the internet.

"But I think what visitors love about coming into the Visitor Center is talking with our people," said Wiig. "It's just that personal connection and getting those little hidden gems. It's very different what you can find online versus what you can get with a very personal recommendation from our ambassadors."

Ambassadors also administer greetings and directions at the two Visit Omaha kiosks at Eppley Airfield – a volunteer hospitality initiative of the Omaha Golden K Kiwanis Club since 1984. Eighteen volunteers share four-hour morning and afternoon shifts on weekdays.

--Visitor Center continued on page 5.

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--Visitor Center continued from page 4.
Most Kiwanians work one shift a week. Since its inception 39 years ago, nearly 1.3 million visitors have sought assistance at the kiosks, and volunteers have logged 136,000 service hours, according to Norman Marfice, the program's volunteer coordinator.

Marfice, who retired after a 30-year career as an executive and electrical engineer with OPPD, said common inquiries at the airport include directions to ground transportation, rental cars and driving directions, even where their jittery pets can go to find relief. Some soon discover that many venues are cashless and need to exchange cash for debit cards (a machine for this purpose is located in the terminal). The most unusual experiences include assisting people who trip and fall on the escalators, typically juggling too much luggage. Twenty-year veteran airport volunteer Don Swanson said a common question remains where to go for the best steak in town. The answer, he said, always depends upon where they are staying.

The city is recruiting additional ambassadors for the 10th Street Visitor Center. Volunteers typically work one three-hour shift weekly or every other week, weekends included. Wiig is seeking people who have a "strong desire to help people in general as well as good customer service skills." Candidates should be able to engage in easy conversation with a focus on learning more about the interests of the guests. "That helps guide their recommendations on things to do."

Life-long Omaha residents are solid candidates, but it's unnecessary as long as the ambassador has "a



The Omaha Visitors Center welcomes thousands of guests annually at the Omaha Visitor Center, located at 306 S. 10th St.

passion for Omaha and all the attractions and things to do in town," said Wiig. New ambassadors shadow experienced ones to learn the ropes, developing confidence and knowledge along the way. This includes becoming familiar with the maps, brochures and travel guides perched throughout the recently-remodeled center. Ambassadors also direct visitors to the resources, features and special promotions highlighted on the visitomaha.com website.

"Try it out. See if you like it," encouraged Wiig. "Give it a little time and see how you interact with people, and if it's something you enjoy doing. It's a lot of fun."

Ambassadors do have a lot of fun bantering with their fellow volunteers as well as the center's guests, especially international visitors. They also appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the community.

Ken Schlueter, a 74-year-old retired Union Pacific executive, has volunteered at the Visitor Center for 11 years. Hours after exiting UP, where he worked in finance for 38 years, he started volunteering at the

Lewis and Clark Visitor Center by the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge. Later he hooked up with the Omaha Visitor Center as well as the Union Pacific Museum. In addition, he now teams with four others to provide history tours aboard tour busses.

"Being a people person, this is so much different than the stress of a finance job," Schlueter admitted. "I just love to promote Omaha. It is especially fun to greet international visitors."

NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

He is especially looking forward to referring travelers to the next phase of the

RiverFront development, the 72-acre, \$300 million lawn, park and recreation space set to open in late summer. Schlueter encouraged retirees to consider volunteering at the center. "If you like to be around people and you like to promote Omaha, this is the place for you." Other perks, in addition to the fun, include free or discounted admission to select area attractions, free front-door parking, holiday gatherings, and exclusive sneak peaks of new venues and attractions, such as the Gene Leahy Mall and the Kiewit Luminarium. For more information, log onto visitomaha.com or call Shannon Wiig at (402) 444-7736. Her email is swiig@visitomaha.com.

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Intercultural Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Intercultural Senior Center (ISC), 5545 Center St. The Intercultural Senior Center facility – open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – offers programs and activities from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. from Monday to Friday. The ISC offers a light breakfast, lunch, crafts, health presentations, fitness, language classes, technology, book club, photography club, chair volleyball, gardening and more. Merry-makers will give a musical performance by Mike McCracken on June 15 at 12:30 p.m. Lunch reservations are due by 9 a.m. A voluntary contribution is suggested for the meal. Please call 402-444-6529 for reservations. Monthly food pantries are available for adults ages 50 and older. ISC's SAVE bus (Sustenance Assistance Vitality Engagement), can bring case management services to your doorstep. For more information, please call 402-444-6529.

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Corrigan Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Corrigan Senior Center, 3819 X St. this month for a variety of activities.

The Corrigan Senior Center is open weekdays from 8 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Lunch is served at noon. A \$4.25 donation is suggested for the meal.

On June 8, Scatter Joy Acres will be bringing an animal to visit us at 9:30 a.m.

On June 13, Corrigan hosts the annual farmers market voucher collection starting at 9:30 a.m.

Mark Sanford from Merry Makers will be performing on June 21 at 11 a.m.

Bingo is played every Monday and Thursday at 12:30 p.m.

Cards and puzzles is played every day of the week at 8 a.m.

Call 402-731-7210 for more information.

La Vista Senior Center

You're invited to visit the La Vista Senior Center, located at 8116 Park View Blvd. The facility provides activity programs and meals Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call 402-331-3455 for general Community Center hours.

Meals are served weekdays at 11:30 a.m. Reservations are due by noon the business day prior to the date the participant wishes to attend and can be made by calling 402-331-3455.

A \$4.25 contribution is suggested for the meal if you are age 60 and older. If you are under age 60, then the meal cost is \$11.

In addition to meals being served daily, the La Vista Senior Center offers a variety of activities such as: Bingo, outings, cooking classes, computer classes, movies with popcorn, arts and crafts, a variety of card games, quilting, tai chi, exercise classes, musical entertainment and various parties.

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Combating age, disability biases

By Andy Bradley
Contributing Writer

Ageism is real and needs to be combated in the workplace, your doctor's office, the halls of Congress, as well as in the recesses of your own mind.

This was the message delivered by keynote speaker Ashton Applewhite at the ninth "Aging with Passion and Purpose" conference, hosted via Zoom.

Applewhite is the noted author of multiple books and articles about aging. "In my mid-fifties, I realized this getting old thing is happening to me," she said. "I started researching longevity and interviewing people over eighty."

Her publications on the subject as well as media and speaking appearances have contributed to her recognition as a globally recognized authority on aging.

In her research, she encountered repeated episodes of age-related bias, as well as negative perceptions of disability. Ageism, she learned, is a form of bias and discrimination based upon preconceived, deeply-imbedded notions regarding the abilities, interests and beliefs of older persons. According to Applewhite, it is akin to ableism, which makes similar judgements regarding the abilities, skills and preferences of persons with disabilities.

"Disability and aging overlap in ways that are important to learn from and build on," said Applewhite. "And unless you die young, you will experience disability, even if temporarily. No one gets a pass."

Examples of bias are especially prevalent in the workplace and healthcare.

"They're being ageist if an employer is reluctant to hire an older person because they think they may retire soon," Applewhite said. "It's ableism if it's because the person might require special accommodations."

"Older workers are key to economic growth," she continued. "Yet illegal discrimination in the workplace is rampant."

She said older workers



and workers with disabilities want accessible and flexible environments, "which is frankly what all workers want."

Healthcare is problematic, too, Applewhite said. "Physicians and their patients write off old age ailments all the time . . . persistent bias in medicine means less treatment, sometimes no treatment at all."

Applewhite, who resides in Brooklyn New York, also discourages assigning positive attributes to individuals based on age or (dis)ability.

"The belief in the wise old person is another stereotype. Some old people are wise, some old people are idiots. Don't assume ever that knowledge flows from wise old people to ignorant young people, or vice versa." She added ageism is not practiced only by the young. "Older people can be the most ageist of all," she said.

Attitudes regarding ageism and ableism are formed from childhood, and are difficult to dispel, Applewhite said. Later in life, those deeply-rooted beliefs can impact how we thrive and navigate in a world dominated by ideal – yet unreal – images of the young, vibrant and healthy. Excessive fear and denial of aging are two by-products of these misguided attitudes.

"I am not saying that being older or having a disability is easy," Applewhite said. "I am not one of those positive, Pollyanna evangelists. This stuff is real, and we absolutely need to include that in our thinking and the way we talk about and depict aging. We're all worried about some aspect of aging, whether running out of money or getting sick or not getting the care we need, ending up alone. Those fears are legitimate and real, but our fears are way out of proportion to the reality."

Some people cope by either denying the inevitable ("that old age stuff isn't going to happen to me") or working feverishly to avert the onset of age and disability through obsessive exercise, frantic activity and risky experimentation with the latest anti-aging potion, pill or cream.

"People go to great lengths to try and look and move like younger versions of themselves," Apple-

white said.

Developing healthy, realistic – yet positive – beliefs toward aging can improve our brain and physical health.

"There is a growing body of fascinating evidence showing that attitudes toward aging affect how our minds and bodies function," said Applewhite. "People who associate later life with growth and purpose walk faster, quicker and live longer – a whopping seven and one-half years longer on average."

In addition, "People with an accurate view on aging, rather than fear-based, are less likely to develop Alzheimer's, even if they have the gene that predisposes them to the disease. Positive age beliefs don't just help prevent mild cognitive decline, they can actually reverse it and improve memory."

Nevertheless, Applewhite doesn't subscribe to the myth of "Successful" aging.

"The term implies that there is a right way to do it. There is no right way," Applewhite said. She added, "successful aging" presupposes "a lot of money and leisure and Suchi and gyms and resources to age successfully. By the standards of Western capitalism, it sets us up to fail. "Sooner or later, you're going to get old."

Applewhite insisted we all age differently. "We age in different ways cognitively, physically and socially. Aging is a process and we're all moving along this conveyor belt together."

In tandem with the mistaken mystique of successful aging is the faulty American notion of fierce independence and rugged individualism. Olders (the term Applewhite prefers to "seniors" or "elders") need to rely more on one another, not less.

"People hold independence up as something that's possible and desirable as we age," Applewhite said. "No one is independent. Ever. From birth to death. We are interdependent."

Interdependence implies routine interaction with and support from other caring, interested and involved parties.

"For people who live with disability and chronic illness, and people who happen to live in long-term

--Ageism continued on page 7.

--Ageism continued from page 6.

care, the most important component of a good old age is having a solid social network."

Without being surrounded by good friends, supportive family and other caring individuals, "we are literally cut off from most of humanity."

Applewhite, author of the New York Times best selling book "This Chair Rocks," said robust advocacy is key to eventually toppling ageism and ableism.

"Dismantling ageism and ableism will take nothing less than mass movements," she argued. "I don't think age equity is perceived yet as a struggle, as a real threat to people. I can't wait for that to happen, and I know it's starting to happen when I get more hate mail."

She encouraged citizens to speak up and out when they witness or encounter ageism and ableism.

"If we don't speak out, nothing changes," Applewhite said. "Institutional change, cultural change is slow and incremental, but it's real. Anytime any of us challenges ageist assumptions, we change the culture."

She has developed comprehensive on-line resources to support advocacy efforts. Old-school.info is a rich source of information for those interested in learning more about aging, ageism and how to combat societal prejudice against elders.

She also encouraged joining forces with disability advocates.

"Our goal is the same – a culture that rejects narrow definitions of productivity and attractiveness. The intersection of ageism and ableism is where many of our darkest fears reside, including illness, incontinence, indignity," said Applewhite. "But it is also where we encounter, in direct proportion to those fears, the potential for personal liberation and collective activism."

ENOA's Senior Companion, Foster Grandparent Programs host Taste of Culture in-service training



NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging's (ENOA) Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs held their Taste of Culture in-service training for volunteers at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, in Omaha.

One of the priorities that AmeriCorps Programs has is developing training around diversity and inclusion.

There were seven tables that shared traditions, stories, and cultural information (from their perspectives of the culture) with the volunteers in a "fair-like" atmosphere.

Volunteers moved from table to table and had their passports stamped at each station after completing each presentation. Once passports were filled, the volunteers were able to put their name in a drawing for prizes.



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We want to hear from you.

- Do you have questions about the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, its programs, or services?
- Do you have a comment about the agency and how it serves older adults in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties?
- Do you have a story idea for the *New Horizons* newspaper, or would you like to receive a **FREE** copy each month?

Please send your questions, comments, and story ideas to:

enoa.info@enoa.org

We appreciate your interest in ENOA and the *New Horizons*.



ENOA

June 15th



WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Building Strong Support for Elders

--Lang continued from page 1.

believers of them all – including herself.

“I am so glad I didn’t say no to the opportunities along the way,” she said. “There were times I walked out of the governor’s office and realized, ‘What did I just do? I said yes. I’m going to fail.’ But then I’d tell myself, ‘Wait. He thinks you can do this. You have to believe it, too.’”

Catherine Lang was born in San Diego. Her father Hugh “Chic” Lang was a Navy pilot and her mother, Lynn, had worked as a legal secretary. Chic Lang joined the Navy soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He served on aircraft carriers and was shot down over the Sea of Japan and rescued by a Navy submarine.

The Lang family was originally from Nebraska and founded a canning company in Beatrice. Lang’s grandfather ran a grocery store in Tecumseh. Lang and her family moved to Nebraska in 1971, and her father worked for 1st MidAmerica as head of operations. Her life partner, John Conley, worked in the research office at 1st MidAmerica, and, ironically, “Dad wrote computer programs for John,” she said.

Lang never intended on a career in state government. “I wanted to be a fashion designer,” she recalls.

She graduated from Lincoln Southeast High School

in 1974 and enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. “I majored in everything,” she recalls. “My junior year, I took Intro to Theater and suddenly became a theater major. I earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts, but because I didn’t have a teaching certificate, I couldn’t get a job.”

Instead, she became what she calls “an accidental attorney.”

“I was working at Taco Inn as a bookkeeper,” Lang said. “One of my friends was studying for the LSAT (Law School Admission Test). So I studied for it, too, took the entrance exam and passed. I entered law school in the fall of 1980 and got my degree in 1983. I am the ‘Legally Blonde’ of Nebraska.”

The fall of her second year in law school, Lang became a law clerk at the Nebraska Department of Revenue. When she graduated, she went to work as an attorney for the department, where she helped develop property assessment policy, represented the department in administrative and judicial proceedings, and prepared legislation and regulations for the implementation of revenue laws.

From 1991 to 1994, Lang served as Special Counsel to the Tax Commission in the Department of Revenue, and in 1994 became director of the department’s Property Tax Division.

In September 1996, Lang was appointed by Gov. Ben Nelson as Nebraska’s first



Catherine Lang is currently the executive director of the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Lang leads the statewide outreach for NBDC to build collaborative efforts across all four campuses of the University of Nebraska supporting the University’s economic development mission to help grow the economy.

Property Tax Administrator in the state’s Department of Property Assessment and Taxation. She was reappointed by Gov. Mike Johanns in 2002.

From 2007 to 2008 she served as Deputy Tax Commissioner in the Department of Revenue, and in 2008 was appointed by Gov. Dave Heineman as Commissioner of Labor for the Nebraska Department of Labor.

In 2011, Gov. Heineman added to her duties by appointing her Director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. “I am the only person to run two state agencies at the same time,” Lang said, proudly.

She held both posts until

2014, when she became vice president at Accelerate Nebraska, where she worked to connect educational institutions with business and community efforts to support workplace development and improve the state’s education and economic systems.

In 2016, she took the helm at the NBDC. Since its founding in 1977, the NBDC has operated out of UNO’s College of Business Administration (CBA), with 10 office locations across Nebraska.

The NBDC began as one of eight University Business Development Centers and has grown to a platform of services and programs that support business development and growth. Program areas include:

- The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of the U.S. Small Business Administration
- The APEX Accelerator Program of the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs (DoD OSBP)
- The FAST program of the U.S. Small Business Administration
- SourceLink® Nebraska, a statewide SourceLink® Network

In addition, the NBDC administers the NU Connections program, which unites all four university campuses to promote programs, services and resources that Nebraska businesses can utilize to grow and diversify. NU Connections provides access to startup assistance, laboratory and facility use, research and technology development, market research and other services. NU Connections is a U.S. Economic Development Administra-

tion (EDA) University Center program.

“The university system has a wealth of resources that can further economic development in the state, but for many entrepreneurs and small business owners, reaching out to the university can be very daunting,” Lang said. “They don’t know who to call or even where to begin.”

“NU Connections opens the doors to the university though the program’s liaison officers,” she said. “Because they are extremely knowledgeable about each campus, these liaisons identify the right resource and facilitate a connection.”

Lang’s board memberships, leadership positions and civic and community service cover several pages in her resume. Still, when asked her greatest accomplishment, she responds without hesitation, “I have three really great kids.”

Her grown sons are Orion, Patrick and Zach. Orion is a mechanical engineer and lives with his family in California. Patrick and Zach are entrepreneurs and small business owners who live in Montana and Lincoln, Neb., respectively.

Lang said she is looking forward to having more free time after January. She and Conley, who is retired, have a second home in Arizona and use it to escape Nebraska’s often unforgiving winters. Both are golfers, and are eager to travel more, especially to California to see Lang’s two grandsons.

Though she said her favorite place to visit “is the next place we go,” she does have one destination in mind. “I want to go to Norway during the summer solstice and do sun salutations,” a graceful sequence of yoga poses. “I am a yoga crazy woman.”

The fact that two of her sons are small business owners is not lost on Lang as she continues to promote economic development through the NBDC and her work with the NU System.

“The NBDC has built a great culture of providing valued services to entrepreneurs and small businesses in Nebraska,” she said. “Because the people who work at the NBDC love what they do and are supported in their efforts, we can do even better work for our clients, and that is what matters most. It’s all about the clients.”

And, she said, about unlocking the doors to success for every one of them.

Come join us as a Senior Companion and bring a smile to a fellow senior in your community!







ENOA

For information to become a Senior Companion Volunteer, call 402-444-6536.

ENOA salutes its 2023 Spirit of Aging Award winners

The Administration on Community Living celebrates Older Americans Month each May.

This is a time to acknowledge and reflect on the resilience and strength that older individuals have had throughout their lives — their successes, failures, joys, and difficulties. It is also a time to celebrate and thank those groups and individuals who support the community’s older individuals through their contributions in the fields of advocacy, volunteerism, donations, and healthcare.

As part of the national salute, the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging presented its third annual Spirit of Aging Awards in the Advocate, Volunteer, Donor and Medical-Homecare categories.

Nominations for the Spirit of Aging Awards came from ENOA staff, Governing Board and Advisory Council members.

Carolina Padilla, Executive Director at Intercultural Senior Center, is the 2023 Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Advocacy category.

“Because of all of her accomplishment advocating for older adults to improve the quality of their lives through nutrition, education, exercise, health and wellness and cultural events, I feel that Carolina deserves the Spirit of Aging Award in the area of Advocacy,” an ENOA staff member wrote in her nomination of Padilla for the award. “Carolina Padilla would be a wonderful nominee for the Spirit of Aging Award because of her advocacy for the older population at the Intercultural Senior Center (ISC). Carolina opened the center and raised numerous funds to help older adults. She has helped the older population with ENOA since the center opened.”

The first location for the Intercultural Senior Center (ISC) was at St Luke’s Lutheran Church in South Omaha. Through the next years ISC continued to grow and moved several more times to meet the growing needs. During this time Carolina was working to establish ISC as a 501c3 non-profit organization in order to raise funds for their own building.

The growth of the participation at the center expanded in 2013 when



The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging(ENOA) celebrated Older Americans Month by recognizing those who have made an impact in the community through their contributions in the fields of advocacy, volunteerism, donations, and healthcare. ENOA presented its third annual Spirit of Aging Awards in the Advocate, Volunteer, Donor and Medical-Homecare categories. The winners included: Rebuilding Together, Platte Valley East; Steamfitters & Plumbers Local Union 464; Carolina Padilla, Executive Director at Intercultural Senior Center; Lisa Hollis, the owner of Heaven Touch.

ISC started welcoming refugee seniors from Sudan, Somalia, Bhutan, Nepal and Burma (Karen population) as well as native English speakers.

In 2019, Carolina’s dream of their own building came true when a final move was made to the current location at 5545 Center Street.

“Due to Carolina’s numerous community connections and fundraising efforts, ISC was able to purchase a building for a permanent location. What makes ISC so special is that it is a model program for bringing together older adults from different backgrounds to create a community that is supportive, encouraging and honors the dignity and value of each individual,” the nomination read. “It was Carolina’s inexhaustive work that resulted in providing a place where the services that were missing for the Latino and Refugee population could be offered.”

Rebuilding Together, Platte Valley East is the 2023 Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Donor category.

Rebuilding Together started with the simple act of neighbors helping neighbors in 1973 when a small group of citizens realized a growing need

in their community. Their neighbors’ homes had fallen into disrepair and the homeowners could not afford to fix them on their own. They volunteered their time and skills to rehabilitate the homes of their neighbors.

Rebuilding Together works to keep their most vulnerable citizens safe and healthy in their homes. Currently, they serve resident homeowners in Dodge and Cuming Counties in Nebraska to provide safe and healthy housing, build ramps, and do critical home repairs.

“Many of our participants need help with their home repairs and modifications which are not able to be made through other programs. Rebuilding Together offers free repairs and emergency services such as furnace repair and plumbing issues to residents who meet income guideline,” the nomination read. “I don’t know what we would do without an agency like Rebuilding Together to help the Dodge County residents served by ENOA.”

Lisa Hollis, the owner of Heaven Touch, is the 2023 Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Medical-Homecare category.

Lisa Hollis has started her own caregiver agency,

Heavens Helpers, and they serve older adults through the Aged and Disabled Waiver program.

“Lisa and her agency stand out from other agencies as they are known to go above and beyond for older adults,” the nomination read. “Lisa and her agency have created livable and thriving home environments for many older adults that were living in unfit conditions for a variety of reasons.”

Hollis and her agency not only go in and provide the required services to the older adults being served but they routinely go the extra mile to make a difference in the lives of the person being served.

Hollis and her staff are known to seek out additional benefits, resources, durable medical equipment, home care items, as well as donate items to those individuals in need.

“Lisa truly treats the older adults being served as family and is never one to shy away from a challenge,” the nomination read. “At any given time, Lisa may be running the office, or she may be the person directly in the home helping the older adult. She seems to always be aware of what is going on with various persons being served. Lisa and her agency are truly appreciated for

the outstanding efforts they continuously make and the difference in the lives of older adults that they are making.”

Steamfitters is the 2023 Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Volunteer category.

For many years the Steamfitters & Plumbers Local Union 464 has serviced older homeowners furnaces each Fall. Each Summer/early Fall, Steamfitters & Plumbers Local Union 464 reaches out to ENOA to start the process of gathering client information for service on the first Saturday morning in October. They take every referral, and even accepts the late ones to ensure older adults have their furnace checked.

“For older adults on a fixed income, or lacking resources, this is crucial to ensure they remain safe in their home. The furnace is serviced, filter replaced, coils cleaned, any concerns discussed with the client/family, and any major issues are reported back to ENOA for staff to follow up.”

“In 2022 nearly several older adults were served by this program, and we look forward to many continued years of partnership.”

ENOA presented the winners awards at a reception on May 9.

For more information about ENOA's Long-term Care Ombudsman Program, please call Marsha Peters at 402-444-6536.

Call First United Methodist Church at 402-556-6262 if you wish to receive more information about the list of the studies available.

A black and white photograph capturing a group of women at a Senior Olympics event. The women are dressed in matching t-shirts that read "SENIOR OLYMPICS RECREATION" and "VISTA". One woman in the foreground is using a walker, while another is holding a golf club. A large Olympic ring logo is visible in the background, and the women appear to be in a playful or competitive activity on a grassy field.

For more information call
the Information Center at
402-916-9309.

Dealing with heat stroke and heat exhaustion in the summer

Any time the temperature rises above 90 degrees, the danger exists that persons exposed to the direct sun may be affected with heat exhaustion or heat stroke. It is important that you know the symptoms and emergency treatment of these two different types of illness.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

The symptoms of heat exhaustion include patient's skin is normally cold, clammy and covered with perspiration instead of hot and dry. The face is pale; other symptoms include headache, loss of appetite, drowsiness, cramps of the limbs and abdominal muscles, faintness or unconsciousness. The pupils of the eyes sometimes are dilated. To treat heat exhaustion, move the patient to a cool place where they may rest and keep them lying down with the head

low. You should send the individual to the doctor for a checkup after they have rested a few moments.

HEAT STROKE

The symptoms of heat stroke often appear quite suddenly and are characterized by collapse, delirium or coma. Certain characteristics include diminished sweating; dry, hot skin and flushed face; rapid pulse; headaches, dizziness and irritability, nausea and vomiting; an extra high body temperature ranging from 105 to 110 degrees; and an extremely rapid pulse.

The heat stroke victim should be taken to a hospital or doctor immediately. Attempts also should be made to lower the body temperature. This can be done by removing most of the patient's clothes and sprinkling the entire body with water. A fine spray of water evaporates more

rapidly and produces a better cooling effect. During transportation, windows should be left open so that air passing over the patient's body will evaporate the water.

The patient's arms, legs and trunk should be rubbed briskly to increase circulation to the skin. If ice is available, an ice bag or towel wrung out in ice water should be applied to the head.

First Aid/CPR Certification/Recertification classes available by calling the Nebraska Safety Council at 402-483-2511.

Submitted by Karen Rehm, Wellness Services Manager, Nebraska Safety Council. To schedule a "Healthier & Happier You" presentation, contact Karen at 402-483-2511 ext. 102 or send an email to Krehm@nesafetycouncil.org.

Sarpy County Museum will soon become a 2023 Blue Star Museum

Sarpy County Museum announced it will join museums nationwide in the Blue Star Museums initiative, a program that provides free admission to currently-serving U.S. military personnel and their families this summer. The 2023 program will begin on Armed Forces Day and end on Labor Day, September 4.

Blue Star Museums is a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and Blue Star Families, in collaboration with the Department of Defense and participating museums across America.

"We are excited the Sarpy County Museum is participating in the Blue Star Museum program. It is a wonderful opportunity for members of the military and

their families to explore the impact and contributions made through local history" said Ben Justman Executive Director of the Sarpy County Museum.

Blue Star Museums include children's museums, art, science, and history museums, zoos, gardens, lighthouses, and more, and hail from all 50 states, District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The free admission program is available for those currently serving in the United States Military—Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force, members of the Reserves, National Guard, U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps, and their family members.

New Cassel Retirement Center says 'thank you' to U.S. Military Veterans



NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

New Cassel Retirement Center saluted over 30 veterans at its "Honoring Our Veterans" event in the New Cassel Auditorium.

King Crossword

- ACROSS**
1 Sailing vessel
6 Clear the deck?
9 Kitten's cry
12 A Marx brother
13 Low digit
14 "Xanadu" band
15 Baby hooter
16 Florida city
18 Handsome guy
20 Convent dwell-ers
21 Brooch
23 Tool set
24 March honor-ee, for short
25 Fed. food inspector
27 Grinding tooth
29 "At once!"
31 Attention-getting call
35 Senior mem-ber
37 Lingerie fabric
38 Houston player
41 Sports drink suffix
- 43 TV spots
44 Foolproof
45 Go places
47 Florida city
49 Revise
52 Tokyo, once
53 "Humbug!"
54 Keaton of "Annie Hall"
55 Lair
56 Bikini top
57 Old anesthetic
- DOWN**
1 HBO competi-tor
2 Attorney's field
3 Florida city
4 Pundit's piece
5 "The Chosen" author Chaim
6 Cuban rum cocktail
7 Burden
8 Zing
9 Convened
10 Justice Kagan
11 In the — way (very much)
- 17 Preambles
19 Spock portray-er
21 Young seal
22 Leb. neighbor
24 — Paulo
26 President Jackson
28 Carter of "Wonder Woman"
30 Overly
32 Florida city
33 Vintage
34 Approves
36 Sultry singer Kitt
38 Queried
39 Soft leather
40 Check the fit of
42 Dodge
45 Russian ruler
46 Send forth
48 Flow out
50 Away from SSW
51 Aachen article

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			32	33	34
			35			36			37			
38	39	40				41		42		43		
44					45				46			
47				48				49			50	51
52				53				54				
55				56				57				

This Month's Crossword Puzzle

	1			3				4
9		4			7		8	
8			6			3		
2					5		9	
		6		1				8
	5		2			1		
	2				6			5
		3		4		7		
1			8				3	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

This Month's Sudoku

Barrier free shower safety and elegance

I know dealing with a family member who needs a barrier free shower is already stressful. You may have fallen into one of these scenarios:

- Mom is not moving around so well. You're considering having her live with you. You're not sure how to make your home and bathroom safe.
- Your spouse got hurt at work. Climbing over the tub to take a shower is an accident waiting to happen.
- Your son was seriously injured in a motorcycle ac-



cident. He's now in a wheelchair. Life won't be the same. You need to design a shower which works for him and won't add to his (already) frustrated state of mind. Let's review basic information about barrier free showers.

A regular shower has a raised threshold, the entry of a barrier-free shower is flush with the floor, creating a seamless surface that gives your bathroom a spacious, airy look. More importantly, it's convenient for everyone from kids to grandparents, including people with mobility challenges. Unlike traditional showers, a walk-in shower doesn't require a shower curtain or a shower door. This creates more design freedom and an illusion of a spacious bathroom.

Another advantage is the continuity of tiles. Because a walk-in shower is on the ground floor, the same bathroom tiles can be placed within the shower area. When installing a linear shower drain, you can now choose large tiles without damaging them. Also cleaning and a timesaving installation due to a one-sided slope is a benefit. Traditional shower drains are placed in the center of the shower and sloped in four directions towards the drain. Creating this four-sided slope is considerably more time-consuming and can only be done with small floor tiles.

In comparison, linear shower drains only require a single slope to work properly, this is easier to construct and takes less effort to clean.

It's important to waterproof your wet area and additionally your bathroom to avoid any leakage. Most moisture related damages result from an improper installation of liquid sealed sealing membranes.

Freedom in design is without any doubt the most important aspect when building or renovating the bathroom area. Although the size of your shower is determined by the available floor space, you remain your freedom by implementing your bathroom design ideas compared to a traditional shower tray. Additionally, you can choose glass panels for your shower walls.

The walk-in shower completely eliminates the need to step in and out of a bathtub or shower base, there are no barriers or thresholds and you can let your bathroom floor tile reach into the shower. Once, a walk-in shower was considered only as a convenience for those with mobility problems, children or the elderly.

A classic shower, like the traditional shower cabin and base, has hard to clean parts and corners where dirt or mold can easily settle. A walk-in shower has opposite characteristics. These spacious showers often have a minimalist design with few places where water and dirt can settle. When installed correctly, a walk-in shower with linear shower drain will drain the water more quickly and efficiently, which means less cleaning and more enjoying.

(David Kohll of Kohll's RX)

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Flaherty Senior Consulting

Caring for a loved one is difficult, and the challenges are amplified during a pandemic. Join Flaherty Senior Consulting for a series of Solutions Group gatherings that will address the questions and challenges caregivers face.

Solutions Groups provide opportunities for caregivers to learn how to deal with various issues, obtain skills and knowledge, engage in discussions, and interact with others in similar circumstances.

Upcoming meeting dates and locations are:

• **July 11, Sept. 12, Nov. 14**

St. Vincent de Paul Church
14330 Eagle Run Dr.

• **June 21, Aug. 16, Oct. 18, Dec. 13**

St. Timothy Lutheran Church
93rd and Dodge streets

• **June 1, Aug. 3, Oct. 5, Dec. 7**

The Servite Center of Compassion
72nd St. and Ames Cr.

• **July 22, Sept. 23, Nov. 18**

Faith Westwood
United Methodist Church
4814 Oaks Ln.

The Solutions Groups are facilitated by Nancy Flaherty, MS, CDP, president of Flaherty Senior Consulting. She has extensive experience working with family caregivers and caregiver groups.

Registration is required to attend each gathering. Masks are mandatory and social distancing will be observed.

Visit flahertyconsulting.net or call 402-312-9324 for more information.

Flaherty also provides private consultations with family caregivers to help them develop individual plans for their loved ones.

For information on private consultations, Solutions Group meeting times, and/or to register to attend a Solutions Group, email Nancy at flahertyconsulting@cox.net or call/text her at 402-312-9324.

Camelot Friendship Center

You're invited to visit the Camelot Friendship Center, 9270 Cady Ave., for regular activities, which include chair yoga, card games, Tai Chi, chair Zumba, Pinochle, 10 Point Pitch, cornhole, and bingo, this month for the following:

- **June 9:** Book Club @ 12:30 p.m.
- **June 14:** Craft Day – “Learn how to make a summer-time Fairy Globe Lights” @ 11 a.m.
- **June 23:** Camelot is closed
- **June 30:** Music by Mark Sanford compliments of Merymakers @ 11:45 a.m.

Every Wednesday – Chair Volleyball @ 10 a.m.

Every Monday – Card Game: Manipulation @ 10 a.m.

Friday Bingo is played the first and last Fridays at 12:30 p.m. – Special “fill” prize.

For more information, contact Barb at 402-444-3091 or barbara.white@cityofomaha.org.

Kiewit Luminarium

Doors to the Kiewit Luminarium is now open to the public.

Kiewit Luminarium welcomes those to a place for people of all ages, identities, and backgrounds to explore astonishing phenomena at the intersection of science, art, and human perception.

Kiewit Luminarium aims to rekindle your curiosity and change the way people see the world. With more than 100 interactive exhibits and a kaleidoscope of engaging programs, guests may want to visit again and again.

They are building a future for Omaha and the region where everyone will have the opportunity to dream, play, wonder, experiment, and consider something new.

Volunteer Connect offers a variety of opportunities

Do you have some spare time, a skill to share, and wish to contribute to your community? Private and non-profit agencies are looking for your help.

Please contact Tia Schoenfeld with the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging's Volunteer Connect program at 402-444-6536, ext. 1045 for more information on the following volunteer opportunities:

- Royal Oaks Assisted Living looking for volunteers to do a variety of things book clubs, gardening, arts.
- Fremont Area Habitat for Humanity construction projects and the Homestore.
- Intercultural Center Volunteers to teach the craft of tatting.
- Intercultural Center Early English / English teachers from 10:20 AM-11:20 AM. M-F.
- Quilters to create ‘Busy Lap Blankets’ for individuals in long-term care and assisted living facilities.
- Volunteers to write greeting cards of

encouragement to residents in skilled care and assisted living facilities.

- Siena Francis House, volunteers to assist with serving breakfast and lunch.
- Tip Top Thrift Shop always needs volunteers on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1 to 4 p.m. Tip Top is located at 5910 Maple Street in downtown Benson. The volunteers would be stocking the Shop and waiting on customers.



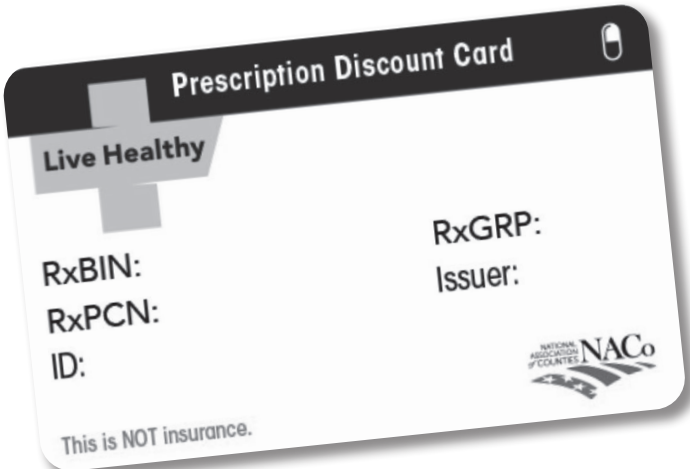
- Volunteers Assisting Seniors (VAS) Volunteers are needed to provide nonbiased Medicare Counseling and Homestead Exemption Application Assistance through Volunteers Assisting Seniors. Free training is provided.
- Volunteer Connect wants men and women to participate in a focus group.

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‘Aiding the aging’ project finalized

The Gross Catholic High School engineering team decided to tackle the ever-present issue of aging with dignity. Through an annual project in the high school’s extracurricular activity, the engineering team zeroed in on nursing home residents because these individuals have the fewest options, smallest voices, and face some of the most difficult challenges.

One student worked in a grocery store and noticed that older people struggle with certain tasks within the store. Also, this same student knew someone that had worked with the elderly in a care facility.

Another student on the team is CNA certified and has experience working with older adults.

In their investigation, the students determined major areas that they could seek to improve: Deciding on the outdated layout, design of nursing home rooms and the resident’s and caregiver’s experience.

Today the harsh reality is rooms in nursing homes are cramped, uncomfortable, and don’t provide personal accommodations. Aside from the physical room itself, there are many other inefficiencies present in nursing home settings.

On both the caregiver’s and resident’s ends, there are countless issues that have become a way of life for everyone involved.

At the end of their investigation, the students developed a goal to solve the problems that caregivers and residents have become all too familiar with.

To accomplish this goal, the engineering team determined the solution best fit to address the issues through a dignity-focused redesign of a skilled nursing facility resident’s room. Their room design includes

much greater square footage, in addition to being augmented by innovative technology and personal accommodations. This project will form the basis for a yearlong project next year where the entire school will reflect on the topic of aging and the elderly. This will be done through all school projects focused on themes of aging with dignity.

ROOM DESIGN

The layout of a common nursing home is similar to a college dorm hall, with rooms lining long hallways and a somewhat cramped, utilitarian floor plan. Most rooms are doubles with a shared bathroom, which can cause issues between roommates because of the lack of privacy, as usually, only a curtain separates the two. This challenges owners to either repurpose previous apartments or dorms for nursing homes, or if the facility is built from scratch, cost-savings typically leads to non-optimal living experiences.

CAREGIVERS

The caretakers of nursing homes face challenges that only increase as time goes on. Many nursing homes continue to use outdated, slow, and inefficient caregiver charting programs, negatively impacting both residents and caregivers. The shortage of healthcare workers has placed further strain on the already stressful duties of staff. Staff often spend much of their time on tasks that could either be automated or sped up by new designs.

Thanks to the resources and different guidance they received, the engineering team was able to successfully complete the project along with learning how to be sufficient engineers and innovators.

Selflessness in healthcare

Lois Jordan, President and CEO of Midwest Geriatrics, Inc., recently contributed at the Leading Age Nebraska Conference and was interviewed for a podcast. Midwest Geriatrics, Inc., manages Florence Home Healthcare Center, Royale Oaks Assisted Living and House of Hope Assisted Living and Memory Care and Gerimed Pharmacy.

By Paula Crozier

According to Lois Jordan, although nationally there are staffing challenges in Long Term care, there are several personal attributes she finds that are deeply rooted in employees finding a “home” in healthcare for older adults.

Ms. Jordan has a unique backstory which began in rural Minnesota.

“Well, many years ago I started with a healthcare interest in high school. My mom was a nurse, and she worked in a nursing home in a small rural town in Minnesota. So, I sort of grew up with nursing homes in my life. I have a twin sister and she and I both took our CNA class, and we actually had our test on our 16th birthday. We passed and then we both worked as CNAs all through high school. I also worked as a CNA through LPN school and then continued to obtain my RN all while working in long term care. It (working in long term care) grows on you,” she said. “I also knew working and being around that industry and being around older individuals was something that was very fulfilling, even at a young age. I had a great deal of respect for our elders, and so working with them just filled my bucket.”

Today of course, Lois finds herself on the employer side, still looking for those candidates who want their “bucket filled” by working with older adults. “You have to care deeply for other individuals.

Being a caregiver is something that I think just comes second nature to people. Caregivers need to give selflessly, and I’ve talked about that with our staff. You’re definitely there to put your needs aside and focus on what somebody else

would need. That’s what makes it all worthwhile. It’s rewarding and challenging,” she stated, adding, “You find your calling, and it’s not just a job. It becomes who you are.”

Being and becoming selfless is so important in caring for older adults and for investing in a career in long term care.

Lois recalled how, “Years ago, I encountered a young individual who was a resident in our nursing home. Unfortunately, her Multiple Sclerosis had progressed to the point where she needed 24-hour care.”

“She was a lovely individual who needed to be very particular about the care she received, especially her positioning. Everybody was scared to work with her because they didn’t know if they’d do it right and she’d sure tell them if they didn’t, but I knew that if I could just take my time and listen to what she wanted, she would be comfortable,” she said. “By being patient and selfless, putting her needs before mine, I learned so much from her and why it was so important that her arm be just right and that her leg was just right. Caring for her made a huge impact in my life. Helping her be comfortable was within my control and it was my responsibility to do the right thing for her sake.

“I carry these values with me today and share them with all our staff. It is so important that we do the right thing for each resident and that takes caring deeply for other individuals. Being a caregiver takes a unique set of skills. Caregivers must give selflessly, put their own needs aside and focus on what the older adult would need, what their family needs and what their co-workers need. If they can do that, they will be the individuals we all want on our team.”

Long term care has definitely shifted over the years. It encompasses person-centered care that is as individualized as each resident.

Lois states that, “It’s invigorating and challenging at the same time. You will find purpose and satisfaction in a career caring for others. It’s not just a job; it becomes who you are.”

These attributes are not only found in the nursing field, but also in

every department Lois oversees. From facility operations to dining services, transportation, procurement, pharmacy and administration, every one of the members on her team exhibit specific qualities of caring for those they serve each day.

Lois has a dear friend, Susan, whom she shares, “Susan is also a nurse who started out working as a CNA as well, but she really exemplified what it is to care for others. Susan goes back to the basics, finding out what each individual needs. She thinks through what she’s doing and uses good common sense. This is just Susan’s character to be genuinely caring, and that exemplifies an ideal caregiver. She is someone we’d all want caring for our own loved ones.”

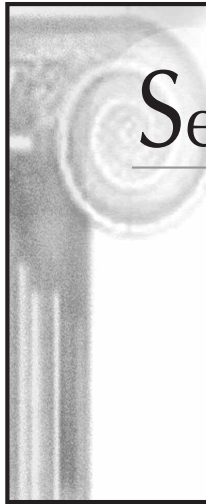
A lot has changed since Lois started as a 16-year-old CNA in her rural Minnesota hometown.

“It has certainly evolved over the years. When I started out as a CNA, a gentleman moved into our nursing home at that time simply because he was lonely. He was a recent widower and his children were grown and moved away. He just wanted to be around other people. He probably didn’t have any medical needs at all, other than his social isolation,” she said. “Now the long-term care industry is so regulated that it’s not possible to admit somebody to a nursing home who is just lonely. So that’s unfortunate.”

Long term care recently has seen an increase in the homeless populations. Lois sees this every day.

“I’m seeing more homelessness, or near homelessness. More and more individuals are moving into our assisted living who have been homeless for a number of months,” she said.

It’s really heart-wrenching to see at that stage in their life how they’ve had to struggle so much for basic needs. This is why our selfless caring professionals are so important. When individuals come to live with us, it’s so very rewarding to be able to give them a safe, loving home. I am so grateful we we’re are still here to be that home for them. If we can give them a joy filled life, we are living our mission.



Seidler & Seidler, P.C.

Attorneys at Law

William E. Seidler Jr.

www.seidler-seidler-law.com

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Fremont Friendship Center

You're invited to visit the Fremont Friendship Center, 1730 W. 16th St. (Christensen Field). The facility is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

A meal is served weekdays @ 11:30 a.m. Reservations, which are due by noon the business day prior to the meal the participant wishes to enjoy, can be made by calling 402-727-2815. A \$4.25 contribution is suggested for the meal.

This month's activities will include:

- **June 1, 8, 15 & 22:** Wheel of Fortune @ 10:30 a.m.
- **June 6:** Farmer Market Coupon Distribution @ 9 a.m.
- **June 6:** Craft Class @ 1:30 p.m.
- **June 7:** Music with Wayne Miller @ 10:30 a.m.
- **June 8:** Humanities of NE Program! "Trick Roping on the Wild West"-Joan Wells @ 9:45 a.m.
- **June 13:** Craft Class @ 1:30 p.m.
- **June 14:** Music with Tim Javorsky @ 10:30 a.m.
- **June 15:** Information about Homestead Exemption @ 10 a.m.
- **June 20:** Craft Class @ 1:30 p.m.
- **June 21:** Music with the Links @ 10 a.m.
- **June 27:** Senior Board Meeting @ 1:30 p.m.
- **June 28:** Music with Bill Chrastil @ 10 a.m.
- **June 29:** Presentation from our Fremont Police Department, Lt. Ed Watts-"WATCH OUT FOR THOSE SCAMS!" @ 10 a.m.

Tai Chi offered every Tuesday and Friday from 9:15-10 a.m.

For meal reservations and more information, please call Laurie at 402-727-2815.

Senior Softball League

Looking to play slow pitch softball?

The Senior softball league for men and women aged 50 and older begins on June 27.

There will be 10 weeks of play, all on Tuesday mornings.

Games are played at La Vista Sports Complex located at 7346 S 66th St.

Players will be drafted onto teams once sign up is closed on June 22.

You can register or direct any questions to John Czuba by email at jtczuba@hotmail.com or call or text at 402-599-3472.

Millard Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Millard Senior Center at Montclair, 2304 S. 135th Ave., this month for the following:

- **June 9:** Crafts (Popsicle Picture Frames) @ 9:30 a.m.
- **June 11:** "Pirates on the Platte" Melodrama at Mahoney State Park
- **June 12:** THEOS (To Help Each Other Socially) @ 12:30 p.m.
- **June 14:** Board Meeting @ 9:30 a.m.
- **June 14:** Sewing group @ 10 a.m.
- **June 20:** Hillcrest Health Services to set a table up outside of center room @ 10 a.m.
- **June 26:** Book Club: The Royal wedding, "The Gown" by Jennifer Robson @ 1 p.m.

Tai Chi every Mondays and Fridays @ 9:30 a.m.

MahJongg Wednesdays @ 1 p.m.

Chair Volleyball Thursdays @ 10 a.m.

Dominoes Thursdays @ 12:30 p.m.

For more information, please call 402-546-1270.

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This Month's Crossword Answers

6	1	2	5	3	8	9	7	4
9	3	4	1	2	7	5	8	6
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4	2	9	3	7	6	8	1	5
5	8	3	9	4	1	7	6	2
1	6	7	8	5	2	4	3	9

This Month's Sudoku Answers

Volunteers Assisting Seniors (VAS) provides assistance with Homestead Exemption Program

By Mike Carsey
Volunteers Assisting Seniors

The Nebraska Homestead Exemption program offers eligible property owners reduced property taxes.

To determine eligibility, a property owner must complete and submit the Nebraska Homestead Exemption application and income statement to your County Assessor's Office.

The percentage of property tax relief for which you may be eligible is determined by a sliding scale.

- You may be eligible if:
- You are over 65.
 - Single and have income below \$48,601.
 - Married, closely related, or widowed and have income less than \$57,701.

You are a Disabled Veteran or a Disabled Individual:

- Single and have income below \$52,801.
- Married, closely related, or widowed and have income below \$61,601.

First time applicants should request an application form packet

from their County Assessor's Office.

Volunteers Assisting Seniors (VAS) helps clients with this program by providing trained and experienced Homestead Exemption volunteers to assist in completing the forms necessary to file for property tax relief through Nebraska Homestead Exemption Program.

Appointments can be scheduled from March 13 to June 29. Call Volunteers Assisting Seniors, 402-444-6617 to schedule your appointment or receive more information.

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Please call 402-444-4148 or 402-444-6654 to place your ad

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ENOA

Sunshine Entertainers showcase singing skills over the last 10 years

By Ron Petersen

Take a trip down memory lane with the help of the Sunshine Entertainers.

Over the last decade, the Sunshine Entertainers (formally known as the Papillion Singing Seniors) have put on programs with plenty of costumes, skits and music all based around a specific theme.

“We are seniors who bring joy to other seniors through musical entertainment,” Sunshine Entertainers director Rajaena Appleby said. “We enjoy going out and greeting the people at nursing homes and assisted living facilities around the area. When we perform, we get some good feedback too.”

The Sunshine Entertainers — who have turned out to be a very popular group — perform for senior living facilities throughout the metro area. They have been booked almost every Tuesday afternoon for the last 10 years (with the exception of “the COVID” year).

“A few people leave here or there, and a few people have joined the group in the last couple of years, but it’s always been a fun group and we take it very seriously,” Sunshine Entertainers performer, John DiBaise said. “To meet the people and to put a smile on their face is one of the best things to feel deep inside. It’s something I appreciate and enjoy.”

The Sunshine Entertainers currently has 13 performers (seven



NEW HORIZONS PHOTO

The Sunshine Entertainers (formally known as the Papillion Singing Seniors) brought joy to seniors through musical entertainment over the last 10 years.

women and six men), all above the age of 60, including four above the age of 80. There are also two married couples in the group.

Each singer gets the opportunity to sing a solo part in each show, but they are never forced to do something they aren’t comfortable doing.

“I feel that what makes us different from other groups is that we don’t just stand and sing but we move around and have skits,” Appleby said. “We just really entertain — for instance in our Nifty Fifties show we have a portion where the

men wear Elvis wigs and sing solos of Elvis songs.”

With every Tuesday booked for the rest of the year, the Sunshine Entertainers look to continue to bring entertainment to older adults while putting a smile on their faces.

“You can see that the people in the crowd are shy at first but if you get them going, they will sing the songs,” Sunshine Entertainers performer, Rob Tiedgen said. “It brings back a lot of memories.”

For their dedication and impact in the community, the Sunshine En-

tertainers loves to perform for older adults, and they have fun doing it together.

“We come together to entertain others — they really love each other and what they bring to the group,” Appleby said. “It’s a time we forget everything else, and we do something that we really love.”

If you are interested in having the Sunshine Entertainers perform at an assisted living facility near you, contact Rajaena Appleby at 402-650-8770 or by email at rajaena@cox.net.



Care Management Services

Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging



There’s no place like home!
Are you age 60 or older and feeling like you might need some help?

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Ask for **“Information and Assistance”**

for more details about Care Management services.



Ralston Senior Center

You’re invited to visit the Ralston Senior Center, 7301 Q St., Suite 100 this month for the following:

- **June 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30:** Double deck pinochle @ 9:30 a.m.
- **June 7, 21 & 28:** Bingo @ 12:15 p.m.
- **June 8 & 22:** Bingo @ 1 p.m.
- **June 14:** Board meeting @ 10 a.m.

Lunch is catered in on Wednesdays @ 11:30 a.m. A \$5 contribution is normally suggested for the meal. Reservations are due by noon on Tuesday. Play games and bingo after lunch. Contact Diane @ 402-885-8895 for reservations.

The Ralston Senior Center will host a double deck pinochle every Friday from 9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Obtain an annual Ralston Senior Center membership for \$10.

Contact Ron Wilson @ 402-734-3421 for further information.

The center may be used on weekends and evenings for various activities such as weddings, memorial services, anniversaries, family reunions, birthdays, baby shower, wedding showers, etc.

For more information, please call Darla @ 402-651-5009 or 402-331-1529.

Respite Across the Lifespan

Life can bring on stress for many of us. Finding ways to relieve stress are important to our overall health and well-being. Caregivers are not immune to this stress.

Please contact Respite Across the Lifespan at edben-nett@unmc.edu or 402-559-5732 to find out more about respite services and to locate resources in your area.