

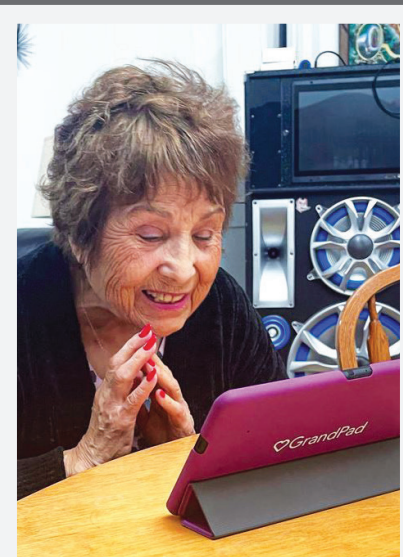
New Horizons



2022 ENOA's *Spirit of Aging Awards*

As part of Older Americans Month, ENOA presents its Spirit of Aging Awards in the Advocate, Donor, Medical-Healthcare, and Volunteer categories. The 2022 winners are (from left): Dr. Chris Kelly from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Physicians Mutual Insurance Company represented by Howard Daubert, CHI Health's Faith Community Health Network represented by Nicki Ayer, and Mary Evans from the Ombudsman Advocate Program.
Pages 9 & 10.

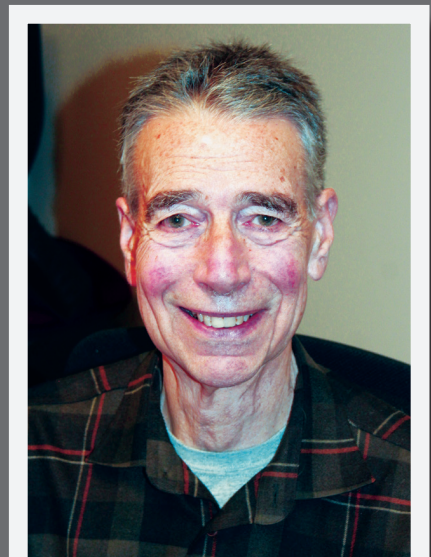
Dreams



Dreamweaver Foundation strives to make dreams come true for older adults like Irene (left) using a GrandPad® to see her granddaughter for the first time. Nick Schinker takes a closer look at Dreamweaver.
Pages 8 and 16.

Student

In 2018, Ken Hites, then age 66, began pursuing his master's and doctoral degrees in gerontology from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Learn more about Ken and his amazing post-retirement academic journey.
Page 13.



Call 1-800-677-1116

Resource information available through Eldercare Locator

If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots, the Eldercare Locator can provide information to help you make informed choices. When you're ready, the Eldercare Locator can connect you to local resources that can help you come up with a plan to get vaccinated, whether it's your first shot or a booster.

The Eldercare Locator can connect older adults, caregivers, and families to services in their communities—services that make getting the vaccine safe and convenient.

The Eldercare Locator is a national, federally funded hotline that provides older adults and their families with information on important topics including COVID-19 and the vaccines, transportation, support services, housing, and more. Trained staff connect callers with Area Agencies on Aging like the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging (402-444-6444) and other community-based organizations that provide personalized support to help older adults stay

healthy and safe.

Contacting the Eldercare Locator is easy. Visit the website at eldercare.acl.gov to browse the listing of online resources or to enter your ZIP code to find services in your community. Live operators are ready to take your call. They can also be reached by chat or email.

Whether you or your family need assistance with meals or home care, or a caregiver needs training, education, or a break from their caregiving responsibilities, the Eldercare Locator can help.

Visit eldercare.acl.gov to learn more about services in your area and to chat with the Eldercare Locator's trained staff online.

The Eldercare Locator is available at 1-800-677-1116 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Callers can request to speak to a specialist in any language. Support is also available by email at eldercarelocator@usaging.org.

Prepare for a flood before one happens

Flooding is one of the worst weather-related disasters and the threat isn't limited to one part of the state or country. Floods can happen quickly almost without warning, and they can pose a tremendous threat to lives and property.

The time to prepare for a flood is before one happens. The National Weather Service suggests you consider a few points:

- What is your flood risk?
- Do you live or work in a floodplain?
- During heavy rains, where will the water likely collect?
- Where do you go if there is a flood?

During a flood it's recommended you stay informed via a NOAA Weather Radio or local media, move to higher ground, and stay out of rooms where water is covering electrical cords.

Never drive, ride, or wade through water even though it may not appear to be deep. You can't know for sure, and just six inches of water can move a car.

The task of staying safe continues once the storm has ended and the waters have stopped rising. Be sure to avoid floodwater and disaster areas, follow road closures and other instructions, keep informed about any new developments, make sure the water you drink or bathe in is safe, check with your local utilities about outages, and never use a portable generator indoors.

Let your friends and family know you're safe.

For more flood response ideas, go to ready.gov or readydouglascounty.com.

Alzheimer's virtual program

The Nebraska chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is sponsoring a virtual program titled *Know the 10 Signs* on Thursday, May 19 at 11 a.m.

The program – which will be presented by community educator Terry Glover – is designed to help people recognize the signs of Alzheimer's, other types of dementia, and normal aging in themselves and other men and women.

For more information, call 402-502-4300 or go online to nebraskainfo@alz.org.

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'Age My Way' is the theme of 2022 Older Americans Month celebration

Older adults play vital, positive roles in our communities as family members, friends, mentors, volunteers, civic leaders, members of the workforce, and more. Just as every person is unique, so too is how they age and how they choose to age. There's no single "right" way to age. That's why the theme for Older Americans Month (OAM) 2022 is Age My Way.

Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads the celebration of OAM. This year's theme focuses on how older adults can age in their communities, living independently for as long as possible, and participating in ways they choose.

While Age My Way will look different for each person, here are common things everyone can consider:

• **Planning:** Think about what you'll need and want

in the future from home and community-based services to community activities that interest you.

- **Engagement:** Remain involved and contribute to your community through work, volunteer, and/or civic participation opportunities.



- **Access:** Make home improvements and modifications, use assistive technologies, and customize supports to help you better age in place.

- **Connection:** Maintain social activities and relationships to combat social isolation and stay connected to your community.

This year, the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging is excited to celebrate OAM with our partners in the aging community.

Diverse communities are strong communities. Ensuring that older adults remain involved and included in our communities for as long as possible benefits everyone. Please join ENOA in strengthening Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties.

Return homestead exemption applications by June 30

Applicants whose names are on file in the assessor's office in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties should have had a homestead exemption form mailed to them by early March. New applicants must contact their county assessor's office to receive the application.

The 2022 forms and a household income statement must be completed and returned to the county assessor's office by June 30, 2022.

A homestead exemption provides property tax relief by exempting all or part of the homestead's valuation from taxation. The state of Nebraska reimburses the counties and other government subdivisions for the lost tax revenues.

To qualify for a homestead exemption, a Nebraska homeowner must be age 65 by Jan. 1, 2022, the home's owner/occupant through Aug. 15, 2022, and fall within the income guidelines shown below.

Certain homeowners who have a disability, are developmentally disabled, are totally disabled war veterans, or the widow(er) of a totally disabled war veteran – including those who have remarried after age 57 – may also be eligible for this

annual tax break.

When determining household income, applicants must include Social Security and Railroad Retirement benefits plus any income for which they receive a Form 1099.

The homestead exemption amount is based on the homeowner's marital status and income level (see below). Maximum exemptions are based on the average assessed value for residential property in each Nebraska county.

Here are the numbers for the local assessor's offices: **Douglas:** 402-444-7060, options #2; **Sarpy:** 402-593-2122; **Dodge:** 402-727-3911; **Cass:** 402-296-9310; and **Washington:** 402-426-6800.



2022 Household Income Table

Over age 65 married income	Over age 65 single income	Exemption %
0 - \$36,100.99	0 to \$30,700.99	100
\$36,101 - \$38,000.99	\$30,701 - \$32,300.99	90
\$38,001 - \$40,000.99	\$32,301 - \$33,900.99	80
\$40,001 - \$41,900.99	\$33,901 - \$35,500.99	70
\$41,901 - \$43,900.99	\$35,501 - \$37,100.99	60
\$43,901 - \$45,800.99	\$37,101 - \$38,700.99	50
\$45,801 - \$47,800.99	\$38,701 - \$40,300.99	40
\$47,801 - \$49,700.99	\$40,301 - \$41,900.99	30
\$49,701 - \$51,700.99	\$41,901 - \$43,500.99	20
\$51,701 - \$53,600.99	\$43,501 - \$45,100.99	10
\$53,601 and over	\$45,101 and over	0

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- ☐ I would like to start receiving the New Horizons at home. My address is below.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

New Horizons

New Horizons is the official publication of the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging. The paper is distributed free to people over age 60 in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Washington, and Cass counties. Those living outside the five-county region may subscribe for \$5 annually. Address all correspondence to: **Jeff Reinhardt, Editor**, 4780 S. 131st Street, Omaha, NE 68137-1822. Phone 402-444-6654. FAX 402-444-3076. E-mail: jeff.reinhardt@enoa.org

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The New Horizons and the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging provide services without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, or age.

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 contribution is suggested for the meal.

This month's activities will include:

- **Tuesdays:** Craft classes @ 1:30 p.m.
- **May 4:** Music by Jerry Stingley @ 10:30 a.m.
- **May 5:** Nye Presentation @ 10 a.m.
- **May 6:** Presentation by Midland University technology students on cyber security @ 10:45 a.m.
- **May 11:** The Merrymakers present music by Billy Troy @ 10:30 a.m.
- **May 12:** Library Book Mobile arrives @ 9:30 a.m.
- **May 17:** Rich Hirschman's presentation on the history of and his travels to Ukraine @ 10:30 a.m.
- **May 18:** Music by Bill Chrastil @ 10 a.m.
- **May 19:** Presentation by Fremont Therapy and Wellness @ 10 a.m.
- **May 24:** Program by UNO's Gerontology Department on Identifying the Needs of Seniors @ 9:30 a.m.
- **May 25:** Music by John Worsham @ 10:30 a.m.
- **May 26:** Presentation by St. Croix Hospice @ 10 a.m.

You can donate to the Fremont Friendship Center on May 10 during the Fremont Area Big Give.

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

Corrigan Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Corrigan Senior Center, 3819 X St. this month for the following:

- **May 12:** The Merrymakers present music by The Links @ 11 a.m.

The Corrigan Senior Center is open weekdays from 8 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Lunch is served at noon. A \$4 donation is suggested for the meal. Reservations, which are due 24 hours in advance, can be made by calling 402-731-7210.

Other activities include:

- Bingo Mondays and Thursdays @ 12:30 p.m. Mega Bingo on May 19 and Prize Bingo on May 30.
- Tai Chi Mondays and Thursdays @ 10 a.m.
- Happy Hands Crocheting Tuesdays @ 9 a.m.
- Ceramics Wednesdays @ 12:30 p.m.
- Play Cornhole and Wii Bowling Thursdays @ 11 a.m.
- Movies and popcorn Fridays @ 12:30 p.m. The May movies are *Sherlock Holmes*, *Hairspray*, *The Untouchables*, and *Gran Torino*.

Call 402-731-7210 for more information.

The importance of maintaining balance

By Libby Guenther, M.S.

Balance is an undervalued principle of everyday life. It keeps us upright, allows us to walk without assistance, and helps prevent injury. Across the human lifespan, balance changes with age. Think about a baby learning to walk or a toddler toddling around with a great deal of stumbling and falling.

From youth through middle age there are many years of good, if not great, balance. Then, unfortunately, with age balance begins to decline and there may be fear of stumbling or falling again. Why does this happen and what, if anything can be done to prevent it?

There are three main systems in our body that help to keep us upright and steady. The vestibular system (inner ear), vision, and musculoskeletal system (muscles and joints) work both independently and together to maintain balance.

The vestibular system is a complex system of canals in the inner ear. Tiny hairs in these canals sense movement of the head due to body movement. These hairs then transmit signals to the brain indicating the body is moving. Any damage to the vestibular system due to illness, injury, or inner ear conditions can cause disruptions in the signal transmission and create issues with balance. Once these signals reach the brain, the brain sends a signal to the muscles to adjust or move to keep the body balanced and upright.

If there's muscle or joint weakness due to deconditioning or injury the body may not be able to perform the movement that's needed to maintain balance.

As with balance, vision also declines with age. Changes in vision, nearsightedness, or farsightedness which can affect depth perception, or simply decreased visual acuity impacts how uneven surfaces or other hazards may be seen and interpreted.

Even though the brain isn't one of the main systems in our body that regulates balance it functions to put all the signals from the other systems together. All signals coming from or to the inner ear, muscles, joints and/or eyes for vision must pass through the brain. Therefore, any type of cognitive dysfunction, brain injury, or impairment may also affect balance and/or the signals traveling throughout the body to help maintain and regulate balance.

Certain medications and drugs can contribute to issues with balance. Alcohol and other illicit drugs can cause acute changes in balance. These changes may happen very quickly once these substances are ingested. Chronic use of alcohol or other illicit drugs can have irreversible effects on parts of the brain primarily or the result of injuries due to ingesting these substances that may negatively impact balance. Side effects or drug interactions from medications can cause dizziness, lightheadedness, or vision impairments that can also affect balance.

Even with so many factors being involved in balance there are some points of focus when working to maintain or improve balance. The first point to consider is the removal or limitation of substances that may be contributing to balance issues. Eliminate alcohol or illicit drug usage, take inventory of prescription medications, and talk with a doctor or pharmacist about interactions that could negatively impact balance.

Next – and these may not be easily diagnosed – talk with a physician (and possibly specialists) about potential vision, inner ear, brain, or nerve impairments, conditions or injuries that could contribute to balance concerns.

The final step, and these recommendations are for anyone even if you don't have balance concerns, is to incorporate exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle into a daily routine. A well-rounded exercise program should include cardiovascular endurance (walking, biking, any activity that raises heart rate), muscular strength, flexibility, and balance specific exercises.

Muscular strength for improving or maintaining balance should include full body, major muscle group movements, and have a focus on strength development. Core strengthening exercise should be included as the core initiates and stabilizes movements of the body. Practices such as yoga and Tai Chi can benefit flexibility, balance, and strengthen the mind-body connection, which can improve awareness of body movements.

There are many balance specific exercises or drills that can be practiced to improve or maintain balance. Some examples include weighted shifts, standing with the eyes closed, standing on one leg with eyes open or closed, lateral hops, and backward walking.

While there are many reasons related to aging that may contribute to a decline in balance, there are also many ways to work to maintain balance and health. If you're already noticing changes in balance, talk with your physician, a physical therapist, or a personal trainer/wellness specialist.

(Guenther is an exercise physiology wellness specialist at the UNMC Engage Wellness Center in Omaha.)

Millard Senior Center

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

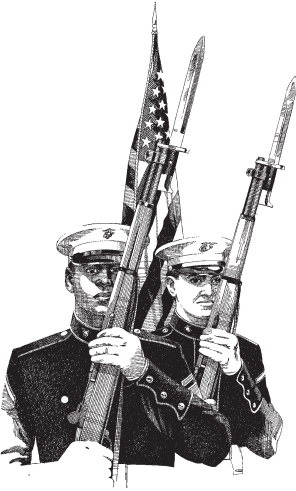
- **May 2:** Writing a book with Dave.
- **May 6:** Bring in Mexican treats to share.
- **May 9:** To Help Each Other Socially (THEOS) meeting @ 12:30 p.m.
- **May 11:** Board meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- **May 11:** National Eat What You Want Day.
- **May 12:** First Thursday of weekly line dancing @ 9 a.m.
- **May 16:** National Love a Tree Day.
- **May 23:** Wear purple for Peace Day.

We're looking to grow our chair volleyball Thursdays @ 10 a.m. Bring your friends to play.

On most Fridays, we play Canasta after bingo @ 1:15 p.m.

The center will be closed on Memorial Day.

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





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Artificial Intelligence tool being used to identify life-threatening heart conditions

Physician-scientists in the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai have created an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that can effectively identify and distinguish between two life-threatening heart conditions that are often easy to miss: hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and cardiac amyloidosis.

“These two heart conditions are challenging for even expert cardiologists to accurately identify, and so patients often go on for years to decades before receiving a correct diagnosis,” said David Ouyang, MD, a cardiologist in the Smidt Heart Institute and the study’s senior author.

“Our AI algorithm can pinpoint disease patterns that can’t be seen by the naked eye, and then use these patterns to predict the right diagnosis.”

The two-step, novel algorithm was used on over 34,000 cardiac ultrasound videos from Cedars-Sinai and Stanford Healthcare’s echocardiography laboratories. When applied to these clinical images, the algorithm identified specific features related to the thickness of heart walls and the size of heart chambers to efficiently flag certain patients as being suspicious for having the potentially unrecognized cardiac diseases.

“The algorithm identified high-risk patients with more accuracy than the well-trained eye of a clinical expert,” said Ouyang. “This is because the algorithm picks up subtle cues on ultrasound videos that distinguish between heart conditions that can often look very similar to more benign conditions, as well as to each other on initial review.”

Without comprehensive testing, cardiologists find it challenging to distinguish between similar appearing diseases and changes in heart shape and size that can sometimes be thought of as a part of normal aging. This algorithm accurately distinguishes not only abnormal from normal, but also between which underlying potentially life-threatening cardiac conditions may be present with warning signals that are now detectable well before the disease clinically progresses to the point where it can impact health outcomes.

Getting an earlier diag-

nosis enables patients to begin effective treatments sooner, prevent adverse clinical events, and improve their quality of life.

Cardiac amyloidosis, often called “stiff heart syndrome,” is a disorder caused by deposits of an abnormal protein (amyloid) in the heart tissue. As amyloid builds up, it takes the place of healthy heart muscle, making it difficult for the heart to work properly. Cardiac amyloidosis often goes undetected because patients might not have any symptoms, or they might only experience symptoms sporadically.

The disease tends to affect older Black men or patients with cancer or diseases that cause inflammation. Many patients belong to underserved communities, making the study results an important tool in improving healthcare equity, Ouyang said.

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a disease that causes the heart muscle to thicken and stiffen. As a result, it’s less able to relax and fill with blood, resulting in damage to heart valves, fluid buildup in the lungs, and abnormal heart rhythms.

Although separate and distinct conditions, cardiac amyloidosis and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy often look very similar to each other on an echocardiogram, the most commonly used cardiac imaging diagnostic.

Importantly, in the very early stages of disease, each of these cardiac conditions can also mimic the appearance of a non-diseased heart that has progressively changed in size and shape with aging.

“One of the most important aspects of this AI technology is not only the ability to distinguish abnormal from normal, but also to distinguish between these abnormal conditions, because the treatment and management of each cardiac disease is very different,” said Ouyang.

Ouyang said the hope is this technology can be used to identify patients from very early in their disease course. That’s because clinicians know earlier is always better for getting the most benefit from available therapies that can be very effective for preventing the worst possible outcomes such as heart failure, hospitalizations, and sudden death.

“The use of artificial intelligence in cardiology has evolved rapidly and dramatically in a relatively short period of time,” said Susan Cheng, MD, MPH, director of the Institute for Research on Healthy Aging in the Department of Cardiology at the Smidt Heart Institute and co-senior author of the study.

“These remarkable strides – which span research and clinical care – can make a tremendous impact in the lives of our patients.”

Eclectic Book Review Club

The Eclectic Book Review Club will meet on Tuesday, May 17 when Creighton University professor emerita Dr. Amy Haddad will speak about the use of prose and poetry in the health care profession with her book, *The Geography of Kitchens*.

The meeting, which includes lunch and the author

book review, is held at noon at The Field Club, 3615 Woolworth Ave. The cost is \$16.

Annual membership dues in the club, which don’t include the cost of the monthly meetings, are \$20.

To reserve a seat at the May 17 luncheon, please call Jo Ann at 402-571-5223. The reservation deadline is Friday, May 13.

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Florence Days fun returns

After a two-year hiatus for the pandemic, Florence Days returns in 2022 with a series of events scheduled for Saturday, May 14 including:

- A beard contest in front of the historic Florence Bank (30th & Willit streets). Registration is at 10 a.m. Judging begins at 11 a.m.

- A parade with the theme *Heroes*, leaves Miller Park (30th Street & Redick Avenue) at 1 p.m. and heads north to McKinley Street. Members of the Omaha Police Department will be the grand marshals.

- The historic Florence Bank Museum will be open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free.

- A beer garden from 1 to 9 p.m. on the outdoor patio at Ramona’s Mexican Café, 8510 N. 30th St. Many drink and food specials will be available.


From May 5 to 12 and May 7 to 14, the Florentine Players will present their 56th annual melodrama, *I Saw Her Standing There* or *The Show Must Go On* at the Florence City Hall, 2864 State St. The doors open at 6 p.m. and the show begins each night at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12.

Snacks and a full bar will be available. For reservations or more information, please call 402-455-6341 or visit florentineplayers.com.

For more information on Florence Days, please contact John Lemen at 402-455-6871.

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Camelot Friendship Center

You're invited to visit the Camelot Friendship Center, 9270 Cady Ave., this month for the following:

- **May 13:** Council meeting @ 12:15 p.m.
- **May 19:** Jackpot bingo @ 12:15 p.m.
- **May 20:** The Merrymakers present music by Bill Chrastil @ 11:45 a.m.
- **May 25:** Craft Day @ 12:30 p.m. A \$5 charge for the pour paint class includes all the necessary supplies.

The center, which is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., will be closed on Memorial Day.

Other regular activities include chair yoga, card games, Tai Chi, chair volleyball, chair Zumba, cornhole, and bingo.

Lunch is served weekdays at 11:30 a.m. A \$4 contribution is requested for the meal. Reservations, which are due a day in advance, can be made by calling 402-444-3091.

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

Intercultural Senior Center

You're invited to visit the Intercultural Senior Center (ISC), 5545 Center St.

The facility – open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – offers programs and activities Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Intercultural SENIOR CENTER

Participants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to attend the ISC. Participants are asked to wear a mask and bring their vaccination cards with them when visiting the ISC.

COVID-19 booster shots are available upon request.

The ISC offers a light breakfast, lunch, fitness classes, programs, and activities. Technology classes are available Tuesdays @ 10:20 a.m.

Lunch reservations are due by 9 a.m. A voluntary contribution is suggested for the meal. Please call 402-444-6529 for reservations.

Foot care clinics are now available. Please call 402-444-6529 for an appointment.

Monthly food pantries are available for men and women ages 50 or older.

ISC's SAVE bus can bring case management services to your doorstep.

For more information, please call 402-444-6529.



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Please see the ad on page 3
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\$50

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\$25

Carole Buczkowski
Gabriella Castro

\$10

Donald Reed

\$5

Robert Jackson
Kathleen Koons
Pamela Carlson

Reflects donations through 4/22/22.

Mental health program
is scheduled for May 10

You're invited to attend a presentation of hope of healing that will discuss the importance of mental health awareness and suicide prevention on Tuesday, May 10.

Sponsored by the Kim Foundation, the 7 to 8 p.m. program, titled *Mental Health Matters Night*, will be held at Pacific Hills Lutheran Church, 1110 S. 90th St.

For more information, contact Marilyn at mmwegehaupt@gmail.com.

Senior Companions,
Foster Grandparents

Men and women ages 55 and older who want to earn a tax-free stipend while making an impact in their community are encouraged to join the Senior Companion Program and the Foster Grandparent Program.

Sponsored locally by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, the SCP and FGP are national programs of AmeriCorps Seniors.

Senior Companions help other older adults maintain their independence by visiting them at home to discuss the news, read mail, play cards, run errands, etc.

Foster Grandparents serve as positive role models for children who need special attention with education, healthcare, and social development in schools, Head Start programs, and child development centers.

SCP and FGP volunteers must meet income guidelines and complete an enrollment process that includes references and background checks.

In exchange for volunteering 10, 15, or more hours per week, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions receive a \$3 an hour tax-free stipend, mileage reimbursement, an annual physical examination, supplemental accident insurance coverage, and other benefits including an annual recognition luncheon.

The stipend does not interfere with rent, disability, Medicaid, or other benefits.

For more information on the FGP and SCP, please call 402-444-6536.

We need your
support!

I would like to become a partner with the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, and help fulfill your mission with older adults.

ENOA

- ☐ \$30 = 7 meals or 1.5 hours of in-home homemaker services or 1 bath aide service for frail older adults.
- ☐ \$75 = 17 meals or 3.66 hours of in-home homemaker services or 3 bath aide services for frail older adults.
- ☐ \$150 = 35 meals or 7.3 hours of in-home homemaker services or 7 bath aide services for frail older adults.
- ☐ \$300 = 70 meals or 14.63 hours of in-home homemaker services or 14 bath aide services for frail older adults.
- ☐ Other amount (please designate) _____
- ☐ Please contact me. I would like to learn more about how to include the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging in my estate planning.

Traditional funding sources are making it more difficult for ENOA to fulfill its mission. Partnership opportunities are available to businesses and individuals wanting to help us. These opportunities include volunteering, memorials, honorariums, gift annuities, and other contributions.

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Omaha, NE 68137-1822
(402) 444-6654

Columnist: Live life to its fullest before it's too late

Two of my dear friends died in the past month. One was in her 70s and one in her 80s. I recognize this will be occurring more and more frequently since most of my friends are in my age bracket. Last month in my *Conscious Aging* column, I wrote about letting go. For me, this month letting go has taken on a whole new meaning.

Conscious Aging
By Nancy Hemesath

My reflections on my friends' lives led me to identify and cherish how they enriched me through the years and how they will continue to do so through so many treasured memories. One friend had an amazing sense of humor. She would always see the funny side of life and kept us laughing through many events. I also experienced her tender heart, especially at a low point in my own life. She had so many friends from every stage in her life, friends she similarly impacted with her contagious spirit. Her memorial service was marked with both laughter and tears and was a tribute to her life well lived.

My other friend was similarly significant to me. She was my friend and my peer in the area of affordable housing. She was so highly respected that at a statewide conference "when she spoke, everyone listened," as the EF Hutton ad used to say. Her greatest gift was her compassion for clients and employees. Her treatment of them gained their love, respect, and loyalty, all of which she then extended back to them. Personally, I benefitted from her wisdom and professional support. Her belief in me helped me believe in myself.

For both deaths, it was important for me to gather with others to memorialize the lost lives. One grief expert asserts that a good funeral (memorial service) goes a long way in helping us to process our grief. Sharing stories and emotions lifts us from sadness to celebration of a life well lived. It enables us to express our gratitude for having had the gift of their companionship along the way.

Inevitably the death of a peer reminds us of our own mortality. This awareness is expressed for me in the lines of a poem by Wendell Berry.

"No, no, there is no going back.
Less and less are you
that possibility that you were.
More and more you have become
Those lives and deaths
That have belonged to you...
Every day you have less reason
not to give yourself away."

My friends gave themselves fully until illness prevented them from doing more. I'm reminded to do what I can for as long as I can. Holding back is ridiculous at this stage. Putting things off is foolhardy. If we have gifts to give, now is the time to give them. If we have love to share, now is the time to express it.

"I will not die an unlived life," wrote the inspirational author Dawna Markova.

(Hemesath is the owner of *Encore Coaching*. She's dedicated to supporting people in their *Third Chapter of Life* and is available for presentations. Contact her at nanhemesath@gmail.com).

The Eastern Nebraska
Office on Aging
has been providing programs and
services for older adults in
Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and
Washington counties since 1974.

Sponsored by UNO's Department of Gerontology
Nebraskans ages 50 and older are invited to share their thoughts on state's aging services at town hall meetings

Nebraskans ages 50 and older are invited to share their opinions to help shape the future of services and care for the state's aging population.

The Department of Gerontology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha is joining with the state's eight Area Agencies on Aging to hold listening sessions across the state. Nebraskans ages 50 and older are invited to share their thoughts to help researchers gauge their awareness of and satisfaction with the federal services delivered by the state's Area Agencies on Aging.

These sessions will take place at various town hall meetings in cities across Nebraska. A schedule for the listening sessions in ENOA's service area can be found below. People can attend whichever session is closest to them regardless of their hometown residency. The structure of questions will be open-ended to allow for attendees to openly voice their opinions on their various needs.

The sessions' data will be part of a report helping the state understand the current and future needs of Nebraskans ages 50 and older.

The results will be factored into Nebraska's next five-year plan that will be sent to the federal government later this year.

Please see the Department of Gerontology/University of Nebraska Omaha (gerontology.unomaha.edu) website for the full schedule of town hall meeting times and locations in Nebraska.

Questions about the sessions can be directed to Christopher Kelly, Ph.D., chair of gerontology at UNO at cmkelly@unomaha.edu.

Here's the schedule of the town hall meetings in ENOA's service area:

May 19 @ 10 a.m.
Bellevue Senior Center
109 W. 22nd Ave.

May 23 @ 9 a.m.
Omaha
ENOA office
4780 S. 131st St.

May 24 @ 9 a.m.
Fremont Friendship Center
1730 W. 16th St.
(Christensen Field)



Age my way!



Dreamweaver Foundation creating memories for older adults

By Nick Schinker
Contributing Writer

The chances to live out a dream are as numbered as the days for many older adults with life-limiting illnesses, and that’s why Dreamweaver Foundation and its dozens of volunteers work so hard to make hundreds of dreams a reality.

Whether it’s as elaborate as a trip to a far-off city, as exciting as a ride in a racecar with Mario Andretti, or as personal as a lunch with a few dear friends, Dreamweaver Foundation will do all it can to put smiles on the faces of older adults and their families at a time when they need happy memories to cherish.

Dreamweaver Foundation Executive Director Cheri Mastny says those heartfelt smiles are exactly what Ron and Jeanie Carson had in mind when they established Dreamweaver Foundation in 2012.

Mastny says the Carsons grew up high school sweethearts in small farming communities in Nebraska. After marrying, they had three children: Chelsie, Maddie, and Grant.

In 1984, Ron went into business for himself starting Carson Wealth, one of the country’s largest wealth advisory firms.

The Carsons are as generous as they are successful. Each has been involved in numerous philanthropic efforts, including sitting on boards of directors of several non-profit organizations.

“One thing they noticed is that there are a lot of philanthropic efforts in Nebraska directed toward children and young adults in need, but not as many toward older adults,” Mastny says. “They also fondly remembered the time when Jeanie’s father was ill, and they decided to fulfill a few of his ‘bucket list’ wishes. One was a trip to Alaska.

“Jeanie tells how when they got to Alaska and her father stood with the ocean on one side and the mountains on the other, the smile that came over his face is an image she will never forget,” Mastny says.

“She decided that she wanted to put that same smile on other older adults’ faces by fulfilling their dreams.”

Dreamweaver Foundation is that dream come true.

From 2012 until Mastny joined the organization six years ago, Dreamweaver Foundation was led by a board of directors. The first year, four dreams were fulfilled. The second year, there were eight, and the third year, 12.

“It’s been like a rocket ship ever since,” she says. “We’re growing at a rate that’s even astounded us.”

To date, Dreamweaver Foundation has fulfilled more than 430 wishes of older adults. To qualify, someone must be nominated on Dreamweaver’s website (dreamweaver.org). The person nominated must fit three criteria:



Dreamer Kent (right) with the legendary Mario Andretti, winner of the 1969 Indianapolis 500. The pair took a 150 to 160 m.p.h. ride in Andretti’s racecar at the Firestone Grand Prix in Florida.

they must be age 55 or older; they must have a life-limiting illness; and they must be living within a low income.

As long as the dreamer fulfills those criteria, “We do not turn anyone away,” Mastny says.

After receiving a nomination, often from a nursing home, a hospice group, or another organization, the foundation reaches out to the nominator to ask a series of questions and gain insight about the person and the particular aspects of their dream. Then, they reach out to the dreamer to arrange a face-to-face meeting to gather details of what they have in mind. It’s all coordinated by Director of Programs Katrina Wulf, the foundation’s “dream director.”

“Whenever we can, we work very closely with family members to arrange things,” Mastny says. “If there is travel or other arrangements that have to be made, we work with whoever is involved. We also capture the event with photos, and then sit down with the dreamer or their family afterwards and write the stories that we post on our website.”

Nancy’s Dream

As an assistant at the *Lincoln Journal Star* newspaper, Nancy worked “behind the scenes” alongside talented writers. It wasn’t until her retirement that she discovered her own gift for writing.

Nancy began writing during a very stressful period in her life. Two of the people she held most dear, her beloved husband and sister, were battling serious illnesses.

For Nancy, writing became a wonderful escape from the stress of her family members’ declining health. But what kept her going was how her stories brought her sister, Linda, a bit of joy and comfort. The two spoke by phone each night, dur-

ing which Nancy would share her latest story. Over the years, Nancy wrote over 170 stories in a stack of eight notebooks. Before Linda died, she encouraged Nancy to have her stories published because she knew the stories could bring others joy.

After her husband’s passing, Nancy moved from her home to Sumner Place in Lincoln. During the loneliest time of the pandemic, Shannon, the dietician at Sumner Place, noticed that Nancy could use some cheering up. Shannon encouraged Nancy to “Dream Big,” and that’s when Nancy was able to share her sister’s dying wish: to have Nancy’s writing published.

Katrina Wulf enlisted the help of three Dream Team volunteers, and the four spent more than 100 hours typing up Nancy’s handwritten work. After ordering several copies through an online self-publishing program, the book, titled *Short Stories for Linda, My Sister*, became a reality. Tears filled Nancy’s eyes when she received a copy of her 232-page masterpiece. It was then she realized that her sister’s dream to see her work published had always been her dream, too.

The COVID-19 pandemic was as sudden and as life-changing for Dreamweaver Foundation as it was for the older adults it serves.

“We thought we were just going to sanitize things and get back to work,” Mastny recalls. “Then we realized the pandemic wasn’t going away, and we had lost access to our dreamers.”

The board members began meeting on Zoom. In those meetings, they shared images of people standing outside nursing home windows, trying to connect with their family members isolated inside. “It was heartbreaking,” Mastny says.

So, the foundation found a solution. It launched a program on July 1, 2020 in partnership with GrandPad®, co-founded in Hopkins, Minn., by Chief Executive Officer Scott Lien.

Designed with older adults in mind, the GrandPad is an eight-inch tablet device with a scrollable interface and large, simple icons for its apps. It comes with a wireless docking station, a stylus pen, 4G LTE, and customer support 24/7. Capable of speaking in 39 languages, its apps include music, video, phone calls, web browsing, photos, games, radio, weather, a camera, and a moods function to reduce stress and anxiety.

“We named the program *Connecting Hope*, and from July through December 2020, we sent out 500 GrandPads,” Mastny says. “We have since taken the program national and have placed GrandPads in 45 states.”

The GrandPads are available by filling out an application on Dreamweaver’s website (dreamweaver.org). Once the GrandPads are no longer used or not needed, they’re returned to the foundation, where they’re sanitized, wiped clean of data, and redistributed to another older adult.

“With the access to news, the Internet, and games, and no need for Wi-Fi, we found the GrandPads improve connections with the community as well as family and friends,” Mastny says. “The program is a huge success.”

Ken’s Dream

Ken had two loves in this life: his wife, Joyce, and INDYCAR Racing.

Every Memorial Day since Ken was 2 years old; it was a tradition for him and his dad to listen to the Indy 500 on the radio. In 1969,

--Please turn to page 16.

ENOA salutes its 2022 Spirit of Aging Awards winners

May is Older Americans Month. The theme for the 2022 celebration – *Age My Way* – focuses on how older men and women can age in their communities living independently for as long as possible in their own homes by participating in a variety of chosen activities.

As part of this national salute, the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging is presenting its second annual Spirit of Aging Awards in the Advocate, Donor, Medical-Healthcare, and Volunteer categories.

Nominations came from ENOA staffers and members of the agency’s advisory council. The winners were selected by a committee of ENOA employees.

Dr. Chris Kelly, chair of the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Department of Gerontology, is the 2022 Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Advocate category.

“Chris is among the many faculty members at UNO who inspire students to study gerontology. He leads his students far beyond the textbooks by exposing them to services for aging adults,” an ENOA staff member wrote to nominate Dr. Kelly for the award.

“For many years, each semester he’s warmly welcomed ENOA staff members into his classroom. He encourages practicums and service projects for his students to gain hands-on experience in the gerontology field. Chris wipes away stereotypes while embracing the gifts the older population offers.”

In 2016, Kelly joined the Senior Companion Program’s (SCP) Advisory Council. Sponsored locally by ENOA, the SCP is funded nationally by AmeriCorps Seniors. Senior Companions are volunteers who provide support and friendship to frail, often isolated older adults in the clients’ homes. Today, Kelly heads the SCP’s advisory council.

“Chris has made incredible contributions to the council through his knowledge and insight into the needs of older Americans,” his nomination read.

Physicians Mutual Insurance Company is the 2022 Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Donor category.

Physicians Mutual supports ENOA’s Meals on Wheels program monetarily and by providing volunteer drivers for meals routes in Omaha and Bellevue.

“Physicians Mutual is an organization whose spirit of generosity allows it to live out its mission and vision of working toward the greater good,” an ENOA advisory council member wrote to nominate Physicians Mutual.

Recently, Physicians Mutual employees shared their love for others by making Valentine’s Day cards for older adults living in nursing homes in Omaha and Indiana.

“Physicians Mutual’s care and concern for older adults is evident through its good works. Yet, they don’t seek out attention or recognition for their work. Instead, they do this with quiet grace and generosity,” the nomination read.

CHI Health’s Faith Community Health Network (FCHN) is the 2022 Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Medical-Healthcare category.

Comprised of approximately 80 faith community nurses and health ministers across Nebraska and western Iowa, the FCHN supports whole person health in local congregations and communities. In 2021, network members volunteered more than 10,500 hours while making more than 102,000 contacts.

Faith community nurses provide health education, promotion, and disease prevention through activities like Tai Chi classes, blood pressure screenings, flu and COVID-19 vaccinations clinics, and mental health support groups.

These dedicated men and women also assess client needs, make referrals to healthcare providers, and advocate for policies and legislation that improve health in their communities resulting in a cost savings of nearly \$400,000 last year for the individuals and families served.

In the Volunteer category, the 2022 Spirit of Aging Awards goes to Mary Evans, a volunteer with ENOA’s Ombudsman Advocate Program.

Ombudsman Advocates visit area long-term care facilities and assisted living communities two hours a week



The Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Advocate category Dr. Chris Kelly with ENOA’s (from left): Trish Bergman, Diane Stanton, and Mary Parker.



The 2022 Spirit of Aging Award in the Donor category was presented last month to Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. From left: UNO Gerontology Professor Dr. Julie Masters, ENOA’s Diane Stanton, Kim Holzapfel (Physicians Mutual), Howard Daubert (Physicians Mutual), Jim Hickling (Physicians Mutual), Aji George (Physicians Mutual), and ENOA’s Trish Bergman.

to make sure the residents are safe and being cared for properly by the facility’s staff.

Evans has been an Ombudsman Advocate volunteer for 21 years. She’s been a dependable and familiar face at Hillcrest Health & Rehab visiting residents each week.

“Mary is a great communicator who helps educate residents about their rights so they’re aware of the type of care they should expect,” wrote an ENOA employee to nominate Evans. “Mary works well with

families and has trained numerous volunteer Ombudsmen to become dedicated and strong advocates.”

Kelly, Evans, and representatives from Physicians Mutual and CHI Health’s FCHN accepted the Spirit of Aging Awards from ENOA’s Executive Director Trish Bergman and ENOA’s Deputy Director Diane Stanton during two receptions at the ENOA office last month.

--Please turn to page 10.

UNO's Biomechanics Department

Volunteers are needed for a University of Nebraska at Omaha Biomechanics Department study that will look at the role of eye movement during walking for people with Parkinson's disease.

Volunteers must be ages 45 to 90, free of neurological disorders (disorders of the brain or nerves) and orthopedic problems that would impede walking and standing.

Study participants will be asked to make a one-time two-hour visit to the Gait Laboratory in the Biomechanics Research Building at UNO. The visit will include tests of thinking ability, standing, and walking.

Participants will wear small wristwatch size devices and special glasses to record eye movement.

To learn more, contact Carolin Curtze, PhD or Suhana Ahamed at 402-554-6334 or sahamed@unomaha.edu.

Spirit of Aging Awards...

--Continued from page 9.

"The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging is both pleased and proud to recognize these amazing indi-

viduals for their outstanding contributions to the agency and the men and women we serve in Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washing-

ton counties," said Stanton. "We thank them for their service and look forward to continuing our partnerships in 2022 and beyond."



ENOA's Trish Bergman (back row, far left) and Diane Stanton (back row, far right) presented the Spirit of Aging Award in the Medical-Healthcare category to CHI Health's Faith Community Health Network (FCHN). Representing CHI's FCHN were (back row, from left): Nene DeRoos Nolan, Cheryl G. Willis, Regina A. Wilson, and Joan M. Mack. Front row, from left: Marilyn Wegehaupt, Mary Therese Gubbels, Rosalee C. Yeaworth, and Nicki Ayer.



The Spirit of Aging Awards winner in the Volunteer category Ombudsman Advocate Mary Evans (third from right) with ENOA's (from left): Diane Stanton, Mary Parker, Marsha Peters, Sharon Greco, and Trish Bergman.



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By Jenni Klausen,
UNMC Pharm.D. Candidate 2022
Andrew Schleisman, Pharm.D.
& David Kohll, Pharm.D.

As we age, our immune systems weaken which increases the risk for contracting certain diseases such as pneumonia, shingles, and influenza. Vaccines are an important way to help prevent or reduce the risk of these infections and their related complications. Pharmacists, however, are on the forefront keeping up with the latest vaccination information.

Pneumococcal infections caused by a bacteria called streptococcus pneumoniae can range from ear and sinus infections to pneumonia and bloodstream infections. Pneumococcal infections are common in young children, but older adults are at the greatest risk of a serious illness and death from these types of infections. Vaccines are the best way to help prevent pneumococcal disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends young children, older adults, and other people with certain medical conditions or risk factors receive the pneumococcal vaccine.

The CDC has recently updated its recommendations to include the Prevnar 20 and the Vaxneuvance vaccines which hit the market in 2021. Adults who have never received a pneumonia vaccine should receive Prevnar 20 (PCV20) or Vaxneuvance (PCV15) if they're ages 65 and older or ages 19 to 65 with certain medical conditions (chronic heart disease, smokers, immunocompromising conditions, etc.).

If the Vaxneuvance (PCV15) vaccine is given, it should be followed at least a year later by the Pneumovax (PPSV23) vaccine. If you've already received the Prevnar 13 vaccine, it should be followed by the Pneumovax (PPSV23) at least a year later.

About one-third of Americans will develop shingles – also known as herpes zoster – in their lifetime. Shingles is a painful rash that can lead to serious complications such as nerve pain (postherpetic neuralgia) that can last months or years after the rash goes away. The risk of getting shingles and having serious complications increases as you age.

The CDC recommends adults ages 50 and older receive two doses of the newer shingles vaccine called Shingrix to help prevent shingles and its complications. Shingrix was recently approved for persons ages 19 to 49 and immunocompromised men and women.

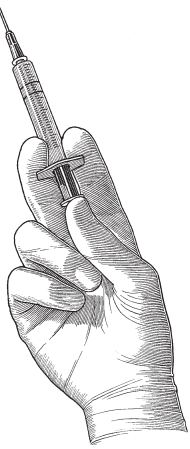
People who have received the older shingles vaccine called Zostavax should receive Shingrix which is more than 90% effective at preventing shingles and related complications. Even if you've had shingles – which can recur – you should still receive the shingles vaccine.

In addition to the pneumonia and shingles vaccines, an annual seasonal influenza vaccine is recommended. If you're ages 65 or older, ask your pharmacist about getting the high-dose or adjuvant flu shot that produces a stronger immune response and better protection against influenza viruses.

The tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine called Boostrix is also recommended every 10 years.

If you have questions about what vaccines are right for you, talk to your pharmacist who will review your immunization list and get you up to date on your vaccinations.

(Klausen, Schleisman, and Kohll are with Kohll's Rx in Omaha.)



Landscape lighting can help make your garden more attractive, safer

By Melinda Myers

Enjoy your garden and landscape once the sun sets with strategically placed and attractive landscape lighting. Select the best type of light that complements your garden design and best accomplishes the intended purpose.

Solar powered lighting eliminates the need for outdoor outlets, extension cords, or buried low voltage lines. The solar panels charge during sunny days and can be mounted on the light or on a long cord, allowing you to place the solar panel where it gets the most sunlight. Some lights turn on automatically at dusk, others have a manual on-off switch, and a few have a remote on-off control.

Votive and pillar candles are longtime favorites. Set them in a container on the table or line a pathway. Unfortunately, the wax does drip, there is a danger of fire, and the flame can blow out in a strong breeze.

Consider using battery-operated candles instead. These look and flicker like the real thing and eliminate some of the problems and dangers of candles. Look for those with remote controls or timers to make lighting your space hassle free.

Use these battery-operated candles in decorative holders like the Dahlia Blossom Punched Metal Lanterns (gardeners.com). You'll enjoy the copper cut lanterns as garden art by day and the intricate light pattern they cast at night.

Pot up your favorite flowers and tropical and edible plants in solar illuminated planters. Luminous solar-powered planters are frosted white by day and can be programmed to display one color or set for color-changing mode. These pots have a 10-foot-long cord, allowing you to place the pots where the plants will thrive and connecting it to its solar panel in a sunny spot nearby.

Solar torch lights have flickering lights that create a realistic look while lighting a pathway or sitting area. Use one to highlight a special spot in your garden or several to light a pathway, patio, or a larger space when entertaining.

Prevent trips and falls while also boosting safe

access to your favorite outdoor spaces by lighting steps and pathways. Look for solar powered lights like Maxxa Solar Ninja Stars that can be mounted on steps, the ground, deck, wall, or other flat surfaces. The integrated solar panels come with a rechargeable battery.

Add overhead glow to patios, decks, or balconies with string lights. They come in a variety of styles to light up larger spaces or highlight your favorite tree. Multicolored waterdrop string lights will add a festive look to any space. Luminites® Solar String Lights feature Edison bulbs that provide six to eight hours of steady or gently flashing modes.

Add some fun, personality, or added interest with specialty lights. Outdoor lights like the Twinklelite™ Solar Stake Lights have flexible branches covered with 120 LED bulbs. Twist and bend the branches to accomplish the look you desire. Then wait for the lights to turn on automatically at dusk.

Add some landscape lighting to help you enjoy quiet moments or festive gatherings in your gardens after dark. Select the best lighting options that are easy to use, complement your design, and provide the needed lighting in your landscape.

(Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books.)



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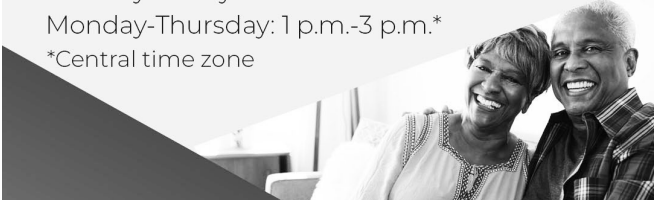
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ENOA needs Ombudsman Advocates

The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging is looking for men and women ages 21 and older to join its Long-term Care Ombudsman Program which is co-sponsored by the Nebraska State Ombudsman Program.

ENOA's Long-term Care Ombudsmen volunteer in local long-term care facilities and assisted living communities to protect the residents' rights, well-being, and quality of life.

Long-term Care Ombudsmen must complete 20 hours of initial classroom training and 12 hours of additional training every two years.

Ralston Senior Center

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

- **May 11:** Board meeting @ 10 a.m.
- **May 12 & 26:** Bingo from 1 to 3 p.m.
- **May 25:** Music by Joe Taylor sponsored by the Merry-makers @ noon.

The center will be closed on Memorial Day.

Lunch is catered in on Wednesdays @ 11:30 a.m. A \$4.50 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.

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

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

The Ralston Senior Center recently selected officers for the first time in two years. The new officers are: President Ron Wilson, Vice-President Charlene Lauer, Treasurer Diane West, and Secretary Diane Walters.

On days the Ralston Public Schools are closed due to the weather, the Ralston Senior Center will also be closed.

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

During the training, the volunteers learn about the residents' rights, aging issues, Medicare, Medicaid, communication skills, how to investigate the residents' complaints, the importance of confidentiality, and about the federal and state rules, regulations, and laws regarding Nebraska's long-term care facilities and assisted living communities.

Before being assigned to a long-term care facility or an assisted living community, new volunteers will make four visits to a site with an experienced Ombudsman Advocate to learn more about what the program entails. After a three-month probationary period, the new volunteers are certified as Ombudsman Advocates.

Certified Ombudsman Advocates will be assigned to a long-term care facility or an assisted living community where they'll visit for two hours a week to meet with administrators, residents, and the residents' family members to address concerns.

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

Survey examines impact of rising Medicare premiums

MedicarePlans.com, a trusted platform for affordable health care resources for the older adult and disabled communities, has published a survey report that examines how the recent premium increase for Medicare Part B will affect older Americans. The study generated responses from 1,250 Medicare recipients and provides insight into how they plan to cope with the additional healthcare expenses.

Survey results indicate 60% of Medicare enrollees will have difficulty paying for healthcare due to rising costs. Low-income older adults are more likely to experience financial strain because of the price increase for Medicare Part B premiums. Of respondents who make \$50,000 or less, 65% say it will be very or somewhat difficult to afford healthcare costs. In contrast, 51% of people who make \$100,000 or more say they'll struggle to pay healthcare expenses.

The study also shows 20% of Medicare recipients spend 50% or more of their monthly income on healthcare expenses like premiums, deductibles, and prescription drugs. Comparably, nearly one-third of Medicare recipients spend roughly 20 to 30% of their monthly income on healthcare.

A little more than a quarter of the respondents say Medicare premiums are their biggest annual expense, while 20% say they spend more on prescription drugs each year.

"Most years, we expect a Medicare price increase, but in 2021, that increase was limited by the CARES Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is playing catch-up," Senior Advisor Kelly Blackwell says.

"Healthcare costs are also rising. The higher premium is expected to fund Medicare spending and keep a reserve. Additionally, the uncertainty around Medicare coverage of some drugs, like the new Alzheimer's drug Aduhelm, was another factor in the price increase."

Nearly 50% of respondents who will have difficulty paying for healthcare also say they'll forgo some type of medical care because of the increased Medicare costs. Some older adults say they'll most likely skip medical care that isn't covered by Medicare.

More than 40% of respondents will go without dental care, and 34% will forgo vision care. Consequently, 29% of Medicare enrollees will skip routine check-ups, while 26% will opt out of outpatient procedures.

(MedicarePlans.com provided this information.)

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:

• May 10

St. Vincent de Paul Church
14330 Eagle Run Dr.

• May 18

St. Timothy Lutheran Church
93rd and Dodge streets

• June 2

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

• June 25

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. Nancy also offers private consultations with family caregivers.

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.

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.

ADRC Nebraska

Aging and Disability Resource Center



The Aging and Disability Resource Center is the first stop for information related to aging or living with a disability.

Call us for information about connecting you to services in your area.

- Nebraskans age 60 and older.
- Nebraskans of all ages with disabilities.
- Serving the populations of Dodge, Washington, Sarpy, Cass, and Douglas.



In Eastern Nebraska, you can contact
ADRC at 402-444-6536,
(toll free) 1-844-843-6364
or adrcnebraska.org



Ken Hites, age 70, working on doctorate in gerontology at UNO



Ken Hites hopes to have his doctoral degree in gerontology from UNO by 2025.

By Jeff Reinhardt
New Horizons Editor

After a decades-long career working in the international and American business communities running gasoline stations, managing credit card/ATM transactions, acquiring and restructuring European banking assets, and consulting for a variety of firms, Ken Hites retired in 2014 at age 62.

At an age and a stage in life many of his contemporaries pick up golf clubs and fishing poles, Hites instead picked up a laptop computer and some notebooks and headed back to college.

He enrolled at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where in 1978 he had earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology.

“I needed some cognitive stimulation, so I went back to UNO and took some classes,” Hites said.

During the next four years, his schedule included courses in French, philosophy, algebra, English Composition, critical reasoning, and rock climbing.

“I was living the dream,” he said.

In 2018, wanting to challenge himself more physically and mentally, Ken spoke about his future in academia with Dr. Laura Grams, an associate professor of philosophy at UNO.

Dr. Grams thought Hites and gerontology (the study of old age, the process of aging, and the unique problems of older people) would be a perfect match, so she put Ken in touch with Dr. Julie Masters, who at the time was chair of UNO’s Department of Gerontology.

Hites quickly became fascinated by gerontology, so he decided to pursue his master’s and doctoral degrees in the subject at UNO.

He said gerontology is a broad, interdisciplinary field of study that examines the social, political, cognitive, behavioral, and health aspects of life across the life course.

“Gerontology overlaps with the things I’m most interested in, and it’s preparing me for the last third of my life.”

“Ken is someone who is helping all of us redefine aging,” said Dr. Masters, who stepped down as department chair in 2020. She still teaches gerontology, however, at UNO and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

“Pursuing a doctorate at this time of his life speaks to his intellectual curiosity along with his determination to make a difference in the world,” Dr. Masters said. “We’re very fortunate Ken chose the UNO gerontology program to continue his education.”

Hites’ family, which includes Gretchen, his wife for 30 years and children Carter, Caroline, and Christopher, ages 23, 21, and 18 respectively, have supported Ken’s decision to earn his post-graduate degrees during retirement.

“They’re used to me being slightly eccentric,” Hites said. “My wife said this is the happiest I’ve ever been.”

Dr. Christopher Kelly, chair of the university’s Department of Gerontology, said Hites offers a lot to the UNO community.

“He brings a unique perspective. He articulates important points about the aging process. His energy and enthusiasm raise the level of each discussion in which he participates.”

In addition to taking doctoral level classes, Hites – who in 2020 earned his master’s degree in social gerontology – spends 20 hours a week in UNO’s Aging Brain and Emotion Lab working with Dr. Janelle Beadle.

“Ken has made significant contributions to



Hites said his wife and three children are used to him being ‘slightly eccentric.’



Hites said he likes the reading, writing, and the constant learning involved with being a college student.

the lab,” Dr. Beadle said. “His organized and comprehensive recruitment plan has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of research participants for our study. I’ve been impressed by his work ethic and his ability to collaborate as part of an interdisciplinary team.”

(For more information on the Aging Brain and Emotion Lab’s need for participants for its latest study, please contact Dr. Janelle Beadle at 402-554-5961 or ABELabUNO@gmail.com.)

Hites said going back to college post-retirement has been intellectually rewarding. “I like the reading, the writing, and the constant learning. I have a real love of problem solving.”

Ken hopes to have his PhD by 2025 and would then like to have a career in gerontology, perhaps running an academic lab involved in the cognitive and/or physical aspects of aging.

Dr. Beadle said she has no doubts Hites will make an impactful contribution to gerontology.

“Ken uniquely combines a passion for the science of healthy aging and an eye for innovation.”

Hites has some unique advice for retirees.

“Find something you find joy in and pursue it at the university level.”



Ken works 20 hours a week in UNO’s Aging Brain and Emotion Lab.

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Intergeneration
Orchestra
of Omaha

Created by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging in 1985 and initially funded for two seasons by a grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation, the Intergeneration Orchestra of Omaha blends the talents of volunteer musicians ages 25 and younger with those ages 50 and older.

The IGO performs primarily for groups of retired older adults and area nursing home residents.

The 37th annual Pops & Pie concert – a fundraiser for the Intergeneration Orchestra of Omaha – is scheduled for Sunday, May 8 at Christ Community Church, 404 S. 108th Ave. The guest artist will be percussionist Joey Gulizia. The doors will open at 2 p.m. for the 3 p.m. performance.

A pie and ice cream reception is scheduled following the concert. If COVID restrictions are in place, the pie will be packaged in to-go containers for guests to take home.

Tickets, which are \$15 or free for persons under age 6, are available by calling Chris Gillette at 402-444-6536, ext. 221. Tickets may also be purchased online at igo-omaha.org.

Combating social isolation

State Unit on Aging, GetSetUp
working to bridge digital divide

The Nebraska State Unit on Aging, serving Nebraskans ages 60 and older, and GetSetUp, a virtual social learning platform designed specifically for older adults, have partnered to help bridge the digital divide and combat social isolation for Nebraskans. The partnership provides live interactive classes by older adults and for older adults from the comfort of their own homes.

“We are excited to offer access to these classes to Nebraskans,” said Cynthia Brammeier, the administrator for the State Unit on Aging. “There is a growing need for digital literacy. Once people are comfortable with their device, the learning opportunities are limitless.”

As broadband internet access expands across the state, the need for older adults to learn using digital devices is becoming critical for healthy aging. The Nebraska State Unit on Aging is sponsoring these online training opportunities for adults ages 60 and older to learn in a safe environment how to effectively use their smartphones, laptops, or tablets to reach out to family and friends more easily, meet with their doctors over telehealth, learn a new skill, socialize, and more.

Two live interactive starter classes are recommended, including *Getting Comfortable with Your Device – A Cell Phone, Tablet, or Laptop* and *New Member Orientation*, which helps users find and sign up for other classes on the GetSetUp website. After completion, Nebraska residents can take classes on a multitude of topics over the next year.

Older Nebraskans can access these services online at getsetup.io/partner/Nebraska.



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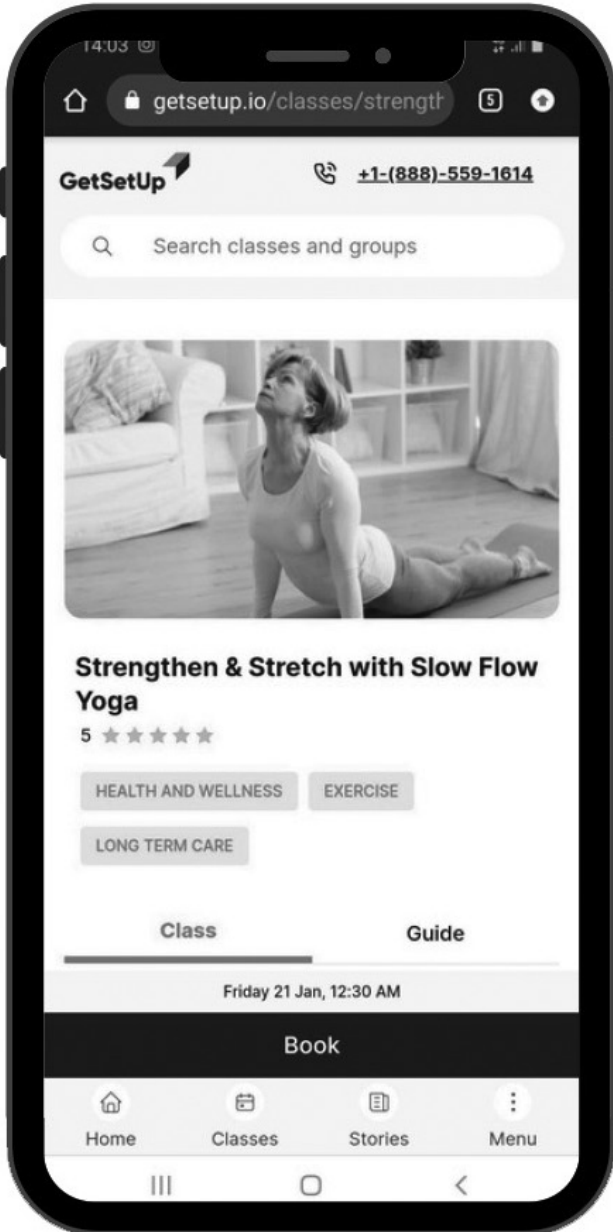
- iPhone Basics
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Physical Fitness

- Morning Fitness
- Core & Stretch Movement

Health and Wellness

- Face Yoga
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Maintain balance in your life

Spring is a good time to improve posture, enjoy outdoor activities

By Paula Crozier

Spring puts a spring into your steps. Ahhh, spring. It's fresh air, wet earth, and warming sunshine. It's also pollen, rain, and the season for cleanup. While there are several things to do in spring, the perfect reminder is "balance".

Balance creates a synergy that enables our bodies, minds, and spirits to sing praises for nature's renewal. We see the sun sprout forth new garden growth and we think we need to rush out and garden, plant those tomatoes, and hoe the hostas back. We really need to consider how we can keep ourselves in balance to enable us to keep everything else well in balance, too.

We've hunkered down for the winter months and perhaps we're a little sluggish. Perhaps we're needing to create better posture, holding our head up high enough to get the sun on our foreheads.

Holding ourselves upright with good posture and shoulders back, helps our core muscles hold up our back, helps align the spine to correct those hips, and helps us to walk forward in balance.

A study on posture and mood in 2016 found of 73 participants, those who were told to walk with upright posture after answering a baseline survey regarding mood while walking, reported an increase in mood, thought clarity, vision, hearing, smell, and taste.

Improving our posture increases our sensory abilities immediately. How cool is that? This posture alignment straightens our lungs and elongates our spine which gives more room for our internal organs and our circulation to increase oxygen flow to the brain. That increases serotonin releases and makes us feel happier.

How often have you seen a slumped over person be happy? When we're happy, we raise our head, put our shoulders back, raise our chin, and smile. Try it. It works.

Balancing our bodies and posture creates easier movement, which in turn, creates better overall physical balance. As we move outside and take in that spring air, it's important to be able to walk without falling or tripping. Our posture will help us maneuver with balance.

If you need adaptive support, please use it. Good physical posture and physical balance brings about mood balance, increasing happiness that in turn leads us to accomplish more tasks. Enjoy cleansing and joyful spring cleaning, gardening, fishing, playing sports, and walking. Stretch those arms and legs.

Spring is about creating new growth, planting those seeds, and caring for ourselves to watch us grow. As much as plants need water, so do we. It's all about taking care of ourselves, too. Water, good healthy food, exercise, and leading with purpose and interacting are all ways to bring great balance and to shake off that winter hibernation.

Plant the posture/balance/happiness seed. Water it by hydrating yourself (drinking water) and give it new sunlight by being outside exercising with walking, gardening, or sitting up and reading. Your balance will improve in every area and bring forth new blooms in you.

(Crozier is with Midwest Geriatrics in Omaha.)

Omaha Fire Department

The Omaha Fire Department's Public Education and Affairs Department will install free smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors inside the residences of area homeowners.

To have a free smoke and/or carbon monoxide detector installed inside your home, send your name, address, and telephone number to:

Omaha Fire Department
Smoke/Carbon Monoxide
Requests
1516 Jackson St.
Omaha, Neb. 68102

For more information, please call 402-444-3560.



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:

- Men and women are needed to write greeting cards of encouragement for residents in skilled care and assisted living facilities.
- Bilingual volunteers are wanted to help translate materials and flyers for the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging.
- Volunteer quilters are needed to create Busy Lap Blankets for long-term care facility residents.
- The Creighton University Medical Center-Bergan Mercy Hospital wants volunteers to take a dessert cart to new Moms who recently gave birth.

- The Creighton University Medical Center-Bergan Mercy Hospital is looking for volunteers to help in the mail room.
- The Siena Francis House needs volunteers to serve breakfast and lunch.
- Volunteer Connect wants men and women to participate in a focus group.



- The Omaha Girls Rock summer camp is looking for volunteer band coaches, instrument instructors, counselors, and workshop leaders.
- Volunteers are needed to knit/sew baby caps/clothing and prayer shawls.
- The Washington County Recycling Association wants volunteers for a variety of duties.
- Boys Town is looking for volunteers to help out at its Visitors Center and Hall of History Museum.

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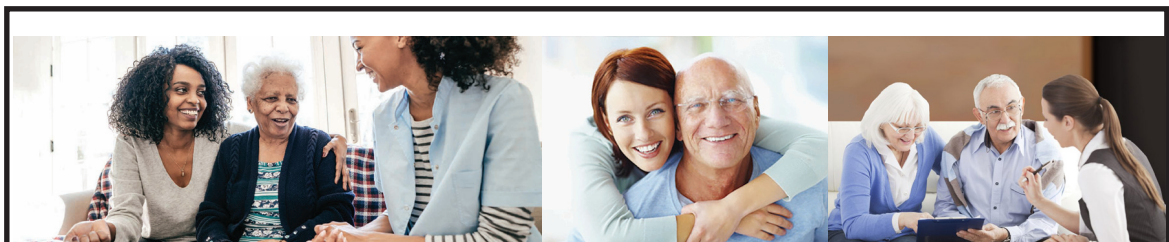
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Dreamweaver...



**Dreamweaver Foundation's team includes
(from left): Director of Programs Katrina Wulf,
Executive Director Cheri Mastny,
and Director of Development Josh Brink.**

--Continued from page 8.

Mario Andretti, Ken's favorite driver, won the race. That's when Ken's dad decided it was time to make a new Memorial Day tradition. In 1971, Ken and his dad attended their first Indy 500 – and they were hooked. In December 2016, Ken was diagnosed with esophageal and stomach cancer. He spent a year receiving treatments and fighting cancer. Just a few days after being told he was cancer free, a brain scan found five tumors. He was given 90 days to live.

When Joyce asked him his dream, he told her, "To meet Mario Andretti."

The Dreamweaver Foundation made it happen.

Mastny says the foundation reached out to Andretti, "and he responded within eight minutes."

Two weeks later, Ken was sitting in Mario Andretti's two-seater Indy racecar at the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Fla. ready to hit the track. Ken said the ride was thrilling. With Andretti at the wheel, the two traveled at 150 to 160 m.p.h. down the straightaways, only to slam on the brakes and then pick up speed again out of the turns. It was the dream of a lifetime.



Dreamweaver
FOUNDATION

Mastny says Andretti invited Ken to attend the following Daytona 500, and that he would make the visit as personal as possible. "Ken's health was failing, but he proved everyone wrong and made it to that race," Mastny says. "He flew home on Sunday, and he passed away on Tuesday."

She says the dreams mean everything to the dreamers and their families, but are also important for the many people involved, including the Dream Team of volunteers.

There are approximately 75 Dream Team volunteers, and training is held once a month. Primarily local people, the volunteers can be involved in a dream fulfillment from start to finish or in bits and pieces along the way. It can be as simple as picking up a cake and balloons or helping someone at the airport and being there to greet them when they return. Afterward, the volunteers help put together a keepsake book of photographs.

Being a part of the foundation has been personally rewarding for Mastny, whose mother served as a hospice nurse until retirement.

"Mom was an incredible individual, and she raised us with a very strong faith," she says. "She always led us to believe that death is the start of a new life."

Mastny has put that belief to work at the foundation, and has passed it along to her children, who have accompanied her on dream fulfillments and witnessed the joy they bring. "It's my legacy to them."

Even when our days may be numbered, Mastny says our dreams are not.

"I love to celebrate life," she says. "I believe people dream until the very end. I don't think it stops just because you're 100 years old. The foundation is here to bring joy to dreamers and their families, and to be able to help create those memories is a wonderful thing."