

New Horizons



Steven
Frazee
*Opening
doors*

The former pastor of a Baptist church in Glenwood, Iowa, Steven Frazee has been on Open Door Mission's staff since 2010, serving today as its chief impact officer. Steven has degrees from the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and Creighton University.

Nick Schinker profiles Frazee on pages 8 and 9.

Departing



Jeff Reinhardt is stepping down as *New Horizons* editor. He thanks the men and women he met along the way.
Page 3.

Graduate

Carolyn Rogers earned her BA degree in May, nearly a half century after beginning classes at UNO.
Page 16.



New Horizons editor is retiring

Dear NH readers:

After nearly 34 years and more than 400 issues, I'm retiring as editor of the *New Horizons* effective June 30. While I've thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, I'm in good health and spirits, and looking forward to starting a new chapter in my life. My plans include volunteering, traveling, spending more time with family and friends, re-reading my collection of Jack Reacher novels, and working with Scott Frost and Trev Alberts to turn around the Nebraska football program.

There are so many people I need to thank including:

- Bob Whitmore who hired me in 1988.
- ENOA's executive directors during my tenure Bev Griffith, Dennis Loose, and Trish Bergman who allowed me to do my job with little interference.
- Mitch Laudenback, the *New Horizons*' advertising manager and graphic artist. Mitch was an important sounding board for me, and his artistic and computer skills were invaluable.
- Nick Schinker and Leo Biga, a couple of longtime friends and the area's top two contributing writers.



- The *New Horizons*' advertisers, many of whom were included in each issue.
 - The ENOA staff and the agency's advisory council members. I've worked with some amazing people who are dedicated to making Douglas, Sarpy, Dodge, Cass, and Washington counties better places to live for thousands of older adults and their families.
 - The people whose stories were told in the *New Horizons* each month.
- While the ENOA management team plans to hire a *New Horizons* editor as soon as possible, it's unlikely an August issue will be published. Your patience and understanding are appreciated during the transition.
- In closing, I want to thank the readers. It's been an honor to be the *New Horizons*' editor. I value your support and loyalty. Stay safe and be well.

Jeff Reinhardt
Editor
New Horizons



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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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Editor.....Jeff Reinhardt
Ad Mgr.....Mitch Laudenback, 402-444-4148
Contributing Writers.....Nick Schinker & Leo Biga

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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.

Free virtual memory screenings available

The Alzheimer’s Foundation of America (AFA) is encouraging individuals to be proactive about their brain health by getting a memory screening. The AFA offers free virtual memory screenings weekdays for everyone with no minimum age or insurance prerequisites.

Screenings can be scheduled by calling the AFA at 866-232-8484 or visiting alzfdn.org. A computer, smart phone, tablet, or any other device with a webcam and an Internet connection is all that’s needed.

“We need to be as proactive about getting regular checkups for our brains as we do for other parts of our bodies, especially as we age,” said the AFA’s President & CEO Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr.

Memory screenings are simple, quick (10 to 15 minutes), noninvasive, and consist of a series of questions administered by a qualified professional to gauge memory, language, thinking skills, and other intellectual functions.

While the results aren’t a diagnosis, a memory screening can suggest if someone should see a physician for a full evaluation.

Early detection of memory impairments is extremely important. Many different conditions can cause memory issues including treatable or curable conditions like vitamin deficiencies, thyroid conditions, urinary tract infections, stress, anxiety, and depression.

Even in the case of a dementia-related illness such as Alzheimer’s, early detection can provide greater opportunity to begin treatments that can help slow the disease’s symptoms. In addition, it affords the person the chance to take advantage of community services such as support groups and therapeutic programming, as well as giving them a greater say in making legal, financial, and health care decisions.

(The AFA provided this information.)



Free interactive courses
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.

GetSetUp’s customized platform offers an interface for older adults to learn, create, and share safely. The platform addresses social determinants of health by helping older adults stay connected to the tools they need to age in place. Older men and women who learn how to utilize their tech devices can stay connected with family and interact with others more efficiently.

GetSetUp’s video learning interface is tailored to older adults of all levels of technology proficiency. The platform offers support via phone and in all classes to assist learners with technology, as well as a booking system with regular reminders and after-class notes.

More than 4.4 million adults use this platform, which features 4,000 classes that promote digital literacy, socialization, health and wellness, and new learning experiences. Classes shift weekly and are available around the clock in multiple languages including Spanish and Mandarin.

“We hear learner feedback daily about how technology is helping to connect older adults not only to friends and family but also to opportunities to learn and age healthier,” said GoSetUp President and Co-Founder Lawrence Kosick.

“GetSetUp empowers older adults to utilize their technology devices in a safe environment that connects them with a vibrant community of peers that are passionate about similar topics. No matter where learners are, social learning with friends is just a click away.”

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

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Tips for making home cleaning projects easy, efficient

By Michael Sweigart

Millions of Americans are busy cleaning their homes. Taking a dive into the deepest and darkest crevices of their house isn't always easy. Mobility issues, low energy levels, and health restraints can make it difficult to keep their home clean. Older adults can still clean like a spring chicken with these tips:

- **Make a plan:** Creating a plan or schedule for yourself can help you accomplish everything you want by the end of the week. A good suggestion would be to designate cleaning certain rooms or spaces every day. This way you're not trying to tackle your entire home and can preserve your energy. Start at one end of

the house in the beginning of the week and work your way through the rest. By the end of the week, you'll have a sparkling home and not feel overworked.

- **Take breaks:** Don't push yourself too hard. By taking breaks you can save yourself from exhaustion and potential injury. Dirty dishes, a messy shower, and laundry that needs to be folded aren't going anywhere. Take your time when cleaning and don't feel rushed. Between rooms you can watch TV, read a book, take a nap, etc. Cleaning doesn't have to be done within a certain amount of time, and by getting ahead of yourself you could make it harder.
- **Take advantage of gadgets or devices:** There are millions of products on the market today that help make cleanup easier. From vacuums that also mop, to mops for the shower. For anyone with pets, cleaning up fur doesn't have to seem like a constant battle. With products like the FurZapper, cleaning up pet hair can be as simple as a load of laundry. It can be used to clean clothes, sheets, blan-

kets, and anything else you throw in the washer/dryer. It's designed to remove fur, hair, lint, and dander.

- **Avoid harsh chemicals:** Using harsh chemicals can create toxic fumes which can make you nauseous, dizzy, and tired. There's a large variety of eco-friendly, cleaning products available that work just as well without having to worry about making yourself sick. Take advantage of them and you might find yourself being able to clean for longer periods of time and doing less damage to your skin.
- **Ask for help:** There are some spaces that might seem uncleanable because there are heavy objects that need to be moved or tight spaces you can't get to with your hands. Acknowledge when or if you need help and don't be afraid to reach out to a family member and ask for assistance. It will likely make cleaning much easier for you and you can get done faster. If you live in a community of older adults, you might ask staff members for help.
(Sweigart is the founder of FurZapper.)

Elder Access Line

Legal Aid of Nebraska operates a free telephone access line for Nebraskans ages 60 and older. Information is offered to help the state's older men and women with questions on topics like bankruptcy, homestead exemptions, powers of attorney, Medicare, Medicaid, and Section 8 housing. The number for the Elder Access Line is 402-827-5656 in Omaha and 1-800-527-7249 statewide. This service is available to Nebraskans ages 60 and older regardless of income, race, or ethnicity. Its hours of operation are 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Friday.

Alzheimer's programs

The Nebraska Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is offering a series of *Knowledge is Power for Successful Aging* programs.

- **July 15 @ 12:30 p.m.**
Know the 10 Warning Signs
- **Aug. 19 @ 12:30 p.m.**
Healthy Living from Brain and Body
- **Sept. 16 @ 12:30 p.m.**
Understanding Behaviors and Communication Strategies

To register, please call 402-552-7210.

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New Horizons Club gains new members

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Value the wisdom, the richness each generation is able to offer

My nephew, his wife, and their five children came to visit for a of couple days last week. Spending time with them reminded me of a point made by a presenter I listened to during a podcast. The speaker said wisdom isn't solely the prerogative of older adults but that every age carries its own kind of wisdom. The truth of this statement highlighted for me the richness in this intergenerational visit.

For example, my 6-year-old great nephew played and played with our little bichon puppy Buster to the delight of both. Before my great nephew left, he reminded us that Buster needed to play fetch with the plastic bottle. Of course, that's true.

My nephew's wife has the wisdom of being a loving and patient mother. Managing five children, ages 4 to 13, is no easy task and yet she does it without raising her voice or losing her cool. Moms know how difficult it can be to pull this off. Her wisdom flows through her positive attitude toward her children and life in general. Reading some good books and listening to podcasts don't hurt either.

I observed that anytime she needed to say "no" to a child, she would say "No thank you." This turn of a phrase was more palatable for all concerned. Bedtimes always were announced with countdowns so that transitions weren't so abrupt. I was impressed by the wisdom of these good parents. I was inspired by them to look for ways I could correct behaviors without being a cranky old aunt.

Conscious Aging

By Nancy Hemesath

I think my nephew makes the effort to bring his family for a visit so his children can learn to enjoy the company of an older person. It's my joy to share myself and my wisdom with them. This ranges from Puppy Care 101 (keep him on a leash, walk him regularly, give only a few treats, and allow some rest periods) to how to play Chinese checkers. The children learned board games can be as much fun as video games. Through all this the children are also learning older people aren't scary and can be fun.

Spending time with my nephew and his wife provides other opportunities to share family memories, knowledge, and wisdom. Perhaps in addition to practical tidbits we share throughout the day is the underlying message that life can still be vibrant and significant in the Third Chapter.

They learned that I haven't turned over all the responsibility of living as an engaged citizen in our country. I still work for justice. I'm still reading challenging books to help me grow as a person. I listen to inspiring podcasts. My spiritual life isn't stagnant.

I remember that in my early adulthood, I thought people don't change much after age 50. Then I became close friends with a woman who was learning to ride a bicycle and swim in her 60s. I realized through this intergenerational friendship that my perception was so wrong and very limited. I continue to believe there's no end to personal growth and the best way to experience that growth is to continue to engage with all generations. Even 6-year-olds have something to say.

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

Camelot Friendship Center

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

- **July 13:** Craft Day @ 12:30 p.m.
- **July 15:** Karaoke with Chuck and Fred @ noon.
- **July 22:** The Merrymakers present music by The Links @ 11:45 a.m.

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

The center – which is normally open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – is closed on July 4.

Lunch is served weekdays at 11:30 a.m. A \$4.25 contribution is requested. Reservations, which are due a day in advance, can be made by calling 402-444-3091.

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

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Conserving, wise usage of water can help you sustain, maintain a beautiful garden

By Melinda Myers

The conservation and wise use of water in our gardens and landscapes is important. Sustainable water use helps grow beautiful gardens while conserving water and helping reduce water pollution and stormwater overflows.

Amend the soil with compost or other organic matter to increase the soil's ability to absorb and retain rain and irrigation water. More water is absorbed by the amended soil so less runs off your landscape and into the street. This means less fertilizer and pesticides wash into nearby storm sewers, rivers, and lakes.

Cover bare soil with a layer of organic mulch. It conserves moisture so you water less. It also prevents erosion and helps suppress weeds. As the mulch decomposes, it improves the soil by adding organic matter and nutrients.

Use rain barrels to capture rainwater that drains off the roof. Purchase a rain barrel or make your own from a recycled food grade container. Evaluate the functional design, appearance, and space needed when making your selection.

The Flat-Back Rain Barrel fits snugly against your house and holds 50 gallons of water.

Add some storage or planting space with a rain barrel like the Madison Rain Barrel with a space on top to hold watering accessories or flowering plants. Use the rainwater for watering gardens and containers.

Start with a call to your local municipality as some have restrictions on water harvesting, while others encourage this practice and

offer rebates.

Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses for applying water right to the soil where it's needed. You'll lose less water to evaporation and overspray. Avoiding overhead watering helps reduce the risk of disease. Irrigation systems also reduce your time spent watering and are especially helpful for container gardens and raised beds.

Systems with closer drippers like the Raised Bed Drip Line Irrigation Kit (gardeners.com) are more effective at watering small areas like raised beds.

Plant native plants suited to your growing conditions and landscape design whenever possible. These deeply rooted plants help keep rainwater where it falls, reducing the risk of basement flooding and overwhelming storm sewers.

The plants slow the flow of water, helping keep it on your landscape for the plants to use. Their deep roots create pathways for rainwater to enter and travel through the soil. Plant roots and soil help remove impurities from the water before it enters the groundwater and aquifers.

When adding walks, patios, or other hard surfaces to your landscape consider enlisting permeable options. Permeable pavers allow water to infiltrate the surface rather than run off into the street and storm sewer.

Steppingstones placed in mulched pathways or surrounded by groundcovers make an attractive walkway or patio. Look for attractive, long-lasting, and easy to install products like the Rubber Leaf steppingstones.

Plant groundcovers suited to the growing conditions and those that tolerate foot traffic. The planted spaces between the hard surfaces allow water to move into and through the soil.

Implementing a few of these changes in your landscape design and water management can help increase your landscape's sustainability while reducing your workload.

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

Nebraska Caregiver Coalition

The Nebraska Caregiver Coalition is providing a free virtual workshop via Zoom titled *Caregivers Caring for Young Adult and Adult Individuals with Developmental Disabilities* on Thursday, Aug. 25 from noon to 1 p.m.

The program – presented by Dr. Lisa Neitzke – is designed to provide training, education, resources, and support for family caregivers. Dr. Neitzke is a licensed psychologist and an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation.

The event will include a discussion of mental health concerns for individuals ages 16 to 64 with developmental disabilities. A brief overview of diagnostic criteria, prevalence rates, treatment, and management of common mental health diagnoses will be provided. Dr. Neitzke will also discuss coping skills caregivers can utilize while caring for an individual with developmental disabilities.

To register (which is required), please visit <https://www.answers4families.org/caregivers>.

Participants needed for UNMC's study on scam vulnerability

Nearly one-third of Americans have fallen victim to a scam. During the past decade, there has been a significant increase in solicitations targeting older adults.

Elder fraud and abuse are impacting older adults' life quality and longevity. Frauds and scams may come in the form of solicitations via phone calls, emails, letters, computer pop ups, etc.

These solicitations may ask for donations, assistance, or advertise unnecessary or non-existent services or products.

The goal is to take advantage of vulnerable individuals. Older adults are vulnerable due to loneliness, a desire to help, or due to declines in judgment that puts them at risk for suboptimal decision making.

The Division of Neuropsychology in the

Department of Neurological Sciences at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is conducting a federally funded research project on how changes in practical judgment and problem-solving skills may impact older adults in terms of scam and fraud.

Researchers are recruiting individuals ages 60 to 90, with or without cognitive impairment to examine the role of cognition, brain structures, and genetic factors on susceptibility to scam and fraud victimization. The study involves one or two visits and doesn't require any follow up visits.

Participants will undergo a brain imaging study (MRI), cognitive testing, and genetic testing with compensation for their time.

To learn more, contact Erica Aflagah, PhD at 402-559-3158 or wnl@unmc.edu.

Ralston Senior Center

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

- **July 6, 13, & 20:** Bingo @ 12:15 p.m.
- **July 13:** Board meeting @ 10 a.m.
- **July 14 & 28:** Bingo from 1 to 3 p.m.
- **July 27:** Music by The Links sponsored by the Merry-makers @ noon.

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.

Participants are needed to play cards and other games on the second and fourth Thursday morning of each month. Call Ron Wilson at 402-734-3421 for more information.

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

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

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



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*.



Finding Our Spiritual Gifts in the Third Chapter of Life
Saturday, October 8
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
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Men and women in the retirement years are invited to explore the spiritual gifts and opportunities available in the Third Chapter of Life.

Nancy Hemesath, MA, an organizational and life coach will guide you, touching on themes of solitude, gratitude, listening, and wisdom. Elements of a successful journey inward that creates a joyous, meaningful life.



Nancy Hemesath, MA

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Open Door Mission is where Frazee’s supposed to be

By Nick Schinker
Contributing Writer

If you want to see the typical homeless person, says Steven Frazee, chief impact officer at Open Door Mission in East Omaha, just look around.

There are statistics and averages and other numbers, but there is nothing typical about the homeless population today. “Sure, there’s the old guy with the beard everyone imagines,” Frazee says. “But we also have teenagers and young individuals. We have families. We have moms with kids and dads with kids. We have grandparents with kids and grandkids. We have moms and moms with kids, and dads and dads with kids. We have refugees, immigrants, and people with medical and mental issues.

“Most share a common denominator – they can’t live without alienating themselves from their families and friends.”

There is something else Frazee sees in common with the people he serves – the face of Jesus. He is a man of strong faith, and he believes there is value in every person.

“The people we serve need more than a handout; they need a way out,” Frazee says. “Our goal is to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. And if we can’t break it for some people, we want to bend it as much as possible.”

Frazee was born in Albany, Ga. His father, Donald, was a pilot and weatherman in the U.S. Air Force before retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel. His mother, Ruth, was the first woman to graduate with a degree in chemistry from what is now the University of Massachusetts-Lowell. Frazee has a sister, Barbara, living in Kansas City.

With his father in the service, the family moved many times. “I went to 10 schools in 12 years,” Frazee recalls.

In 1969, one of those moves brought the family to Bellevue and Offutt Air Force Base. The family soon relocated but returned to Nebraska in 1976. Frazee was a junior at Bellevue High School, and then was part of the first graduating class of Bellevue West High School.

After his retirement, Donald Frazee taught statistics at Bellevue University, while Ruth taught math and science at Bellevue East High School.

In 1982, Steven Frazee earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting and finance from Creighton University. It was at a church in Bellevue that he met his future wife, Danie, a physician’s assistant in the CHI Health System.

The couple married 31 years ago. They have three adult sons: Daniel, Jonathan, and Peter, and two grandchildren, Max and Isabelle, from Daniel and his wife, Becky.

After Creighton, Frazee was do-



Steven and his wife, Danie – who live on a Loess Hills acreage – have three sons and two grandchildren.

ing government contract work but hadn’t found his passion. “I really wanted to pursue theology,” he recalls. “Not so much as a source of employment, but because I wanted to find things out.”

In 1998, he earned a Master of Divinity in Theology from the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. He served as an interim pastor in the Boston area before returning to Nebraska to pursue a doctorate in education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In 2004, Frazee became pastor of First Baptist Church in Glenwood, Iowa, where he served until 2009. “I really enjoyed my time there, and it worked out well for us,” he says. “Peter was born at that time, and with my schedule I was able to care for him because Danie had less flexibility in her job.”

In 2010, Frazee joined the staff at Open Door Mission as senior development officer. He also served as senior program director for more than eight years before taking on his current duties as chief impact officer.

He and his wife live on an acreage in the Loess Hills outside of Council Bluffs. They enjoy taking exploratory walks and visiting Colorado, in particular Rocky Mountain National Park and the YMCA of the Rockies near Estes Park. They also

gained a fondness for sea cruises until COVID-19 came about. “Neither of us subscribe to phone service aboard the ship, so it’s a great way to disconnect from the world for a while,” he says.

They are planning a cruise to Greece, Egypt, and Israel. Additionally, Frazee makes himself available to fill a pulpit when the need arises.

After all the moves he and his family have made over the years, Frazee says he has found his mission and home. He’s in a place where he can care more for others than himself, and says he finds that very rewarding.

“I truly believe it’s a calling,” he says. “I am where I’m supposed to be.”

In his 12 years at Open Door Mission, Frazee has seen many changes and has done all he can to help the Mission adapt and serve.

“The mental health component of the homeless population has grown dramatically, and we are seeing more people with more substantial issues,” he says. “People take up alcohol or drug use in an attempt to medicate themselves, and the things some people focus on to help resolve these issues are only temporary and aren’t comprehensive. Here, we try to help people focus on

improving the whole person.

“Yes, we can talk about Jesus if you want to. But our primary goal is to help you get healthy so you can make the decisions you want to make.”

When the Mission was founded back in 1954, thousands of men had come to Omaha seeking work on the city’s 10 railroads. They congregated in bars and slept in flop-houses. Garland Thompson, a student at the Omaha Bible Institute, assisted by Pastor Jerry Dunn and a group of Christian businessmen, launched the Open Door Mission in the Ballenger Building at 13th and Douglas streets.

In 1986, the Mission was relocated under the City of Omaha’s Urban Renewal Plan to East Omaha where it was less visible to the community, which cost it a great deal of support. Rev. Robert O. “Pastor Bob” Timberlake came on as executive director in spring 1987 and began to change that. At the time, there was no food pantry, no clothing program, and no rehabilitation program.

Pastor Bob worked untiringly to remedy this situation, and Open Door Mission’s current programs, including Lydia House and family outreach, were initiated and developed under his leadership.

In addition to Lydia House for women and families, Open Door Mission also operates the Garland Thompson Men’s Center emergency shelter, along with an acute care clinic in partnership with Nebraska Medicine, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Clarkson School of Nursing, and the Charles Drew Health Centers. It also administers several life improvement programs:

- New Life Recovery Program (NLRP) is a Bible-based 12-step residential program committed to providing men, women, and families the tools they need to become self-sufficient, contributing members of the community.

- The Journey to Work Program focuses on breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty through personal development, money management, job training, and educational skills including GED classes.

- The Veteran’s Housing First Program links the Housing First and Veterans Administration (VA) combined goals of crisis intervention, emergency services, screenings, and assessments in areas of mental health, chemical dependency, job skills, training, and life skills.

- The Work Net Program offers participants opportunities that are fulfilling and lead to gainful employment.

Open Door Mission also provides several drop-off locations where the community can bring much needed items – such as bottled water for the hot summer months – for distribution. While the Timberlake Outreach Center drop off location is closed for renovations until July

--Please turn to page 9.

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Call Beth at 402-444-6536

ENOA is recruiting volunteers to become 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.

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.

Nurse answers questions about Alzheimer's symptoms, treatment

By Paula Crozier

I recently had the chance to interview Carly Snider, LPN, a community nurse at House of Hope Alzheimer's Care in Omaha about Alzheimer's.

Q: What was Alzheimer's Awareness Month (celebrated in June) about?

CS: Alzheimer's Awareness Month is about getting the word out about Alzheimer's. It's a time to bring light to what Alzheimer's is and how it affects individuals, their loved ones, and friends. It's a time for education, to teach and learn, and to raise awareness about the challenges, research, and everything Alzheimer's encompasses. It's also a great time to find out more about the communities and the different types of providers available to help those affected by Alzheimer's.

Q: What are the early symptoms of Alzheimer's we should be paying atten-

tion to and reporting to our medical providers?

CS: Early symptoms of Alzheimer's vary amongst individuals, but some common symptoms are memory loss that affects your daily life, difficulty completing routine tasks, new issues with speaking or writing, decreased or poor judgement, changes in mood or personality, becoming withdrawn from work and social activities, and increased confusion with time or place. If you or your loved one is experiencing these symptoms, consult a medical provider.

Q: How does one start understanding the early symptoms of Alzheimer's?

CS: The early symptoms of Alzheimer's should be taken seriously and addressed in a timely manner so you can get a treatment plan in place earlier rather than later. The sooner the diagnosis of whatever is causing these symptoms, the better the potential for a treatment plan that can be addressed and implemented. There are a ton of resources available to help you learn more about the early symptoms of Alzheimer's, but a good first step is talking to your medical providers.

Q: When should you tell family, friends, and caregivers about your Alzheimer's concerns and what should they know about these concerns?

CS: I've been working with people who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia for many years and everyone's journey is different. Not everyone with Alzheimer's is the same as the next. It's usually difficult to accept the fact an individual has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia, and a lot of different feelings and emotions come along with that. It's important to tell family, friends, and caregivers so they understand if the individual with the diagnosis is acting differently or is needing increased assistance, so they can provide help and support.

In addition, they can learn more about Alzheimer's and how to help the individual and their loved ones continue to live their best quality of life. It can be hard, however, because not everyone understands what Alzheimer's is or how to deal with it, so education and open dialogue is best. Ultimately, it's up to the individual and their family to let others know and what they want them to know. As the disease progresses the individual and their loved ones will face different challenges and will need increased love and support.

When talking to caregivers that provide help in the home or in a care community, it's important to be open and honest about the needs of the individual with Alzheimer's, what type of assistance and care they're needing, and any physical or emotional needs and challenges that occur, so those caregivers and communities can provide the best possible care.

Q: What types of care are available in memory care facilities?

CS: Memory care communities provide a safe and secure environment, activities to help enhance the resident's quality of life to keep them social, active, and engaged, usually three meals a day, snacks and drinks, specialized care staff members that are educated on Alzheimer's, dementia, and memory loss, and around-the-clock caregivers that supply a variety of assistance depending on the resident's needs. Memory care also includes medical and nursing oversight and assistance with medications and hygiene. Most memory care communities have a medical director that can provide care and medical treatment working with nurses.

Q: Where else can I get information about Alzheimer's?

CS: There are many resources available in our community such as the Alzheimer's Association, your primary care physician or other medical providers that specialize in Alzheimer's and dementia, caregiver support groups, local memory care communities, on-line forums, senior care placement advisors, and the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging are all good resources.

(Crozier is with Midwest Geriatrics, Inc. of Omaha.)

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.

These gifts are tax exempt.

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The New Horizons
is brought to you each month
by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging.

VAS can help older Nebraskans navigate the Medicare system

Older adults in Sarpy and Douglas counties have a resource to help them navigate the Medicare system. Volunteers Assisting Seniors (VAS) is offering free, unbiased workshops this summer. The Sarpy County workshops will be held July 12, Aug. 9, and Sept. 13 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Calvary Christian Church's North Building, 10100 Cedar Island Dr. in Bellevue.

The Douglas County workshops will be held July 20, Aug. 17, and Sept. 21 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the New Cassel Retirement Center's auditorium, 900 North 90th St. in Omaha.

The workshops are designed to explain Medicare and to help older adults make informed decisions about their Medicare options. Presenters are Certified Medicare Counselors who don't sell insurance products.

"We guide people through the process. Hopefully they'll seek out individual counseling so we can design a plan specific to their particular needs," said Mike Carsey, a Certified Medicare Counselor and a VAS board member.

Due to limited space, advanced registration is required to attend the Medicare workshops. Registration can be accomplished online at vas-nebraska.org or by calling 402-444-6617.

VAS' target audience is older men and women within two to three months of their 65th birthday or older adults who worked after age 65 and have employer group health insurance ending due to retirement.



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 12, Sept. 13, & Nov. 8**
St. Vincent de Paul Church
14330 Eagle Run Dr.

• **July 20, Sept. 21, & Nov. 16**
St. Timothy Lutheran Church
93rd and Dodge streets

• **Aug. 4, Oct. 6, & Dec. 1**
The Servite Center of Compassion
72nd St. and Ames Cr.

• **Aug. 27, Oct. 22, & Dec. 17**
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.

A stairlift will enhance safety, provide added peace of mind for homeowner, family members

By David Kohll, Pharm. D.

Getting up and down your stairs can be easily accomplished by using a stairlift. A stairlift will allow you to take control of your stairs, giving your family members peace of mind and providing you a greater sense of independence in the home you love.

A stairlift is a piece of assistive technology consisting of a chair that carries you safely up and down stairs on a rail that's secured to your stair treads. Stairlifts prevent falls, help avoid tripping hazards, and remove the significant barrier of the staircase (whether straight or curved), so you can enjoy the full use of your home.

Here are a few things to look at when considering adding a stairlift in your home:

- Does a stairlift take up much space? Styles that have a vertical rail allow a stairlift to be installed close to the wall. That means there is maximum free space on the stairs for other family members and friends.
- How is a stairlift powered? Stairlifts are generally battery operated and work during a power outage. They

only require a standard wall outlet to accommodate the continuous charge battery.

- How much does a stairlift cost? New straight and curved stairlift prices vary depending on a variety of factors including the stairway configuration and length, stairlift type, and power options. You can usually get a free quote based on your unique home and needs. For a straight rail, prices range from \$2,500 to \$3,700. For a curved rail, prices range from \$7,000 to \$25,000 depending on configuration.

- Is a stairlift easily removed? Generally, a stairlift can be easily taken out if you're moving or no longer need it, often with little evidence the chairlift was ever there. Stairlifts are installed onto the stair treads, not the wall. No structural modifications are needed.

- Is stairlift financing available? Stairlifts are a great option to avoid the cost of remodeling or moving. Stairlifts aren't covered under health insurance or Medicare, however, many stairlift dealers offer financing plans.

- Are grease or gears exposed? With some stairlift models that feature a sleek vertical rail with a covered gear rack, you don't need to worry about exposed grease attracting dirt, pet fur, or children's fingers. Other stairlift models don't require grease, but the gears are exposed so things such as pet fur can get caught in the gears.

- Are used stairlifts an option? Yes, but I would recommend only having a used stairlift installed by a certified dealer. Most dealers will not install a used stairlift if it's more than five years old.

- Is renting a stairlift an option? Experienced stairlift dealers will rent a stairlift. Keep in mind there will likely be an installation fee. Usually arrangements can be made if the rental can be turned into a purchase.

Some stairlifts have up to a 400-pound lift capacity, a limited lifetime warranty, with options like a power swivel seat and/or a power folding footrest.

Other things to look at when thinking about adding a stairlift in your home include how smooth is the ride, the installer's experience, the length of time the installation will take, and how quickly after you've made the purchase will the installation begin?

(Kohll is with Kohll's Rx in Omaha.)

Help bring elder abuse out from the shadows.

Each year, as many as 5 million older Americans are abused, neglected, or exploited.

(Only one in six of these men and women, however, report their abuse to authorities.)

Join the fight against elder abuse!

Warning signs include slap marks, unexplained bruises, malnutrition, withdrawal from normal activities, and sudden changes in finances.

To report adult abuse in Nebraska, call Adult Protective Services (toll free) at **800-652-1999**

Together, we have the power to prevent elder abuse.

Gerontology research study

The University of Nebraska Omaha's Department of Gerontology needs older caregivers for an individual with mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, or frontotemporal dementia for a research study titled *Characterizing Risk Factors for Burden in Caregivers to Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Frontotemporal Dementia*.

The study will examine differences in burdens for caregivers who provide support to recipients with frontotemporal dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Although caring for patients with both types of dementia can result in caregiver burden, it may be caused by different behavioral and psychological issues.

The study includes an online visit via Zoom lasting nearly an hour involving online questionnaires, an interview, and computer tasks.

Compensation is available for participants who must be ages 50 or older, an unpaid family caregiver for five or more hours per week for at least six months, able to comprehend written and spoken English, and have completed at least two hours of high school.

Men and women will be excluded from the study if they have a neurological or psychiatric disease, abuse drugs or alcohol, have vision, hearing, cognitive, or motor difficulties, are pregnant or breastfeeding.

For more information, contact Naomi Adjei at 402-554-5961 or ABELabUNO@gmail.com.

UNMC working to reduce anxiety in patients considering deep brain stimulation surgery

Anxiety among patients considering deep brain stimulation surgery is common, but University of Nebraska Medical Center innovators are using simulation and 3D printing to screen and prepare patients for a surgical procedure in which they remain awake.

The UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences has neuropsychologists on staff to screen patients to determine if they're ready for the challenging procedure and will work with them to overcome their trepidation.

The procedure is used to help alleviate the symptoms of diseases such as Parkinson's, essential tremor, dystonia, and other neurological conditions.

It's challenging for many reasons. Patients are awake as a hole is drilled into their heads, and they're often asked by the surgeons to respond to questions or make movements as the delicate three to four-hour operation which involves implanting one or more electrodes into the brain is underway.

"They are feeling the pressure, they're hearing the drill," said Erica Aflagah, PhD, a UNMC neuropsychologist. "At some point, there is microelectrode testing, which causes a loud, unusual noise. The surgeons are talking them through it, and they are good at that, but there are moments where a person could panic."

For some patients, that moment arrives early when they're fitted with a metal device known as a stereotactic head frame which stabilizes their head during the surgery, and a plastic, box-like attachment called a fiducial localizer box, which is attached to the frame and obscures the patient's view.

Dr. Aflagah and her colleague Pamela May, PhD, have been told by neurosurgeons the head frame can be anxiety-inducing for patients.

"Part of our role is screening for anxiety that could interfere with the surgery process itself – claustrophobia, panic," Dr. Aflagah said.

"Sometimes people who were otherwise good candidates had concerns

about claustrophobia and panic when dealing with the head frame and attachment."

The concerns are understandable. The head frame is an intimidating device. Made of metal, it's screwed tightly into the outer surface of the skull for the surgery. The fiducial localizer box obscures the vision, and although that section is removed during the surgery, the head frame is bolted to the operating table, immobilizing the patient's head and neck.

It's a tough experience for the neuropsychologists to mimic, and although they ask about claustrophobia, patients' self-reporting isn't always accurate.

"Everyone's going to have anxiety, especially undergoing awake brain surgery, but the concern is will they be able to respond to providers' simple commands or to follow through the procedure?" Dr. May said. "We wouldn't want the anxiety to get in the way of their ability to react to the surgeon's requests in time."

The department of neurological sciences frequently works with Nebraska Medicine's Department of Psychology and UNMC's Department of Psychiatry when dealing with patients' pre-surgery anxieties. So, Drs. May and Aflagah approached Justin Weeks, PhD, psychotherapy director of UNMC's Anxiety Subspecialty Treatment Program.

Weeks said his team hasn't been able to allow patients exposure to the head frame and box because the fiducial localizer boxes are expensive (about \$30,000) and using them for practice risks damaging the devices. Brainstorming with the anxiety program's medical director, Lauren Edwards, MD, the group came up with an idea: What about a virtual reality (VR) simulation?

Would the designers and programmers be able to create a virtual reality scenario that could mimic wearing a head frame/box device while the patient was wearing a virtual reality headset? The short answer was no, said Bill Glass, iEXCEL's artistic director.

"The problem with the VR for this type of use is, normally with VR your focal point is a short distance in front of your eyes," Glass said. "But the head frame and box would be much closer to your face."

Still, the iEXCEL team was intrigued by the problem so the iEXCEL team borrowed a head frame and a box from UNMC's Division of Neurosurgery. Computer 3D artist Anthony Lanza photographed, measured, researched, and modeled the costly pieces of equipment working with neurosurgery physician assistant Dennis Rieke who provided information and feedback.

Lanza does a lot of research before creating virtual 3D models. He came to UNMC from the gaming industry as a modeling/texturing software expert, and said he enjoys working to facilitate medical education.

"I like teaching and research. Transitioning from gaming to working in higher education – I was previously at Bellevue University – was great for me. I love the projects we get here. Every day it's something new, and I feel like I'm helping my community by being part of UNMC and iEXCEL."

Rieke, who has been involved in deep brain stimulation at UNMC since 2006, said Lanza wasn't overstating the device's potential impact.

"There's a noticeable difference when people have gone through a procedure before as to how comfortable they are," Rieke said. "This is a simulation, obviously, but just having a little experience goes a long way in making people feel more relaxed."

Deep brain stimulation can be a life-changing surgery, Rieke said. He has seen bedbound patients able to travel again and patients able to drink from cups without lids for the first time in years. But as an elective surgery, patients must decide if they're prepared for the procedure.

Drs. Aflagah, May, and Weeks are delighted with the early results and the patients they've talked to are eager to try the device.

"I'm quite pleased with how it looks from a neuropsych perspective," Dr. Aflagah said. "It's nice to have something concrete to show people and have them try on. It makes us better able to assess. We're still relying on self-reporting on how they feel they're going to react, but the model will help patients be more objective."

(UNMC provided this information.)

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The importance of being screened for autoimmune diseases

By Dr. Chad Larson,
NMD, DC, CCN, CSCS

Nearly 10 million Americans have some type of autoimmune disease. That’s about 3 percent of the population. In comparison, cancer affects about 4 percent of the population in the United States. While it’s common knowledge that regular cancer screenings are recommended, people rarely screen in advance for autoimmune diseases or autoimmune triggers.

While it affects almost the same percentage of the population, preventative screenings for autoimmune disease are far less common than cancer screenings. With a simple test and some lifestyle changes, we might be able to naturally prevent autoimmune disease triggers, thereby reducing the number of people plagued by autoimmune disease.

The good news is that it’s possible to detect the signs of certain autoimmune diseases developing in the body before the onset of symptoms.

Autoantibodies give us clues. Autoantibodies are antibodies the immune system makes that attack the patient’s own proteins causing the autoimmune disease. One study found predictive autoantibodies can be used as early indicators of future disease.

Another study showed autoantibodies were present up to nine years before the patient noticed symptoms.

“Autoimmune diseases arise when an environmental insult superimposed on genetic susceptibility disrupts normal immune regulation,” said Aristo Vojdani, Ph.D.

“All of this means in some cases we’ll be able to detect the presence of triggers with the presence of autoantibodies or environmental factors far in advance of an autoimmune disease taking hold. We’ll also be able to naturally decrease risks and reduce the level of autoantibodies.”

Many things can trigger autoimmune disease. Some triggers can be identified and then steps can be taken to naturally prevent the autoimmune disease from persisting. Sometimes the presence of one autoimmune disease can lead to the development of another, so it’s vital to look at a patient’s health as a whole to properly diagnose and develop a prevention plan.

Autoimmune disease triggers to keep an eye out for include:

- **Leaky gut:** The digestive system is crucial to a person’s health and well-being. Leaky gut occurs when bacteria and other toxins are able to seep through the intestinal wall into the rest of the body. This is also referred to as increased intestinal permeability. While much about leaky gut is still unknown, it’s recognized a healthful diet, reduction of stress, and working toward good gut health in general can minimize the occurrence.

- **Dietary proteins:** Again, diet plays a huge role in our autoimmune health. Diets that are low in protein but high in processed fats and sugar can lead to a dysregulated immune response, thereby allowing some autoimmune diseases to develop.

Abnormal reactions to foods – also known as food sensitivities – can also be immune triggers, raising the potential for autoimmune development.

Well known examples include the connection between gluten and Celiac disease and dairy and Type 1 (autoimmune) diabetes. By identifying this situation early, a patient’s diet can be altered, lowering the likelihood an autoimmune disease will be able to persist.

- **Chemicals:** Exposure to harmful chemicals has become part of everyday life. These synthetic chemicals can lead to a slew of health problems including disruption of the endocrine system, which may lead to weight gain and obesity and hinder the body’s natural

immune response. There are approximately 10 million new chemicals released each year. That’s more than 1,000 per hour.

Identifying and removing reactive chemicals in a patient’s environment that can disrupt their immune response is a simple and natural way to prevent autoantibodies.

- **Pathogens:** Some autoimmune diseases are caused by pathogens (like viruses, bacteria, and mold) that enter the body. While not everyone that becomes infected with a specific pathogen develops a corresponding autoimmune disease, it’s important to note it can happen. Staying healthy and reducing risk of certain virus exposure and infection can help patients naturally avoid the development of an autoimmune disease.

Taking a deep dive into a patient’s autoimmune health can provide helpful insights. Cyrex Laboratories, a clinical laboratory specializing in functional immunology and autoimmunity, has developed a test panel called the Multiple Autoimmune Reactivity Screen.

This test measures predictive autoantibodies, some of which can appear up to 10 years before clinical symptoms. It will efficiently and economically assess possible tissue damage to multiple organs of the body to help physicians diagnose autoimmune disorder as it develops. With this screen as a base, it’s possible we may be able to reduce the percentage of people affected by autoimmune disease with a simple blood test.

Patients will be better able to identify indicators of future disease and naturally remove triggers before they become symptomatic.

(Dr. Larson is an advisor and consultant on the Clinical Consulting Team for Cyrex Laboratories.)

River City Theatre Organ Society

The River City Theatre Organ Society’s annual concert is scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 7 at the Rose Theater, 2001 Farnam St.

The concert – which begins at 3 p.m. – will feature Zach Frame playing the Rose Theater’s mighty Wurlitzer organ, the only pipe organ in a Nebraska theater.

Special pre-order discounted tickets are available through the mail for \$20. Tickets will also be available at the door on Aug. 7 for \$25.

To purchase tickets through the mail, send a check made out to the RCTOS for \$20 per ticket to RCTOS, 8825 Executive Woods Dr. #85, Lincoln, Neb. 68512.

For more information, please contact Jerry Pawlak at jerpawlak@windstream.net or 402-421-1356.

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. Reservations, which are due 24 hours in advance, can be made by calling 402-731-7210.

July activities include:

- **Monday & Thursday:** Bingo @ 12:30 p.m.

- **Tuesday:** Happy Hands Crochet @ 9 a.m.

- **July 5:** Ice Cream Social @ 1 p.m.

- **July 6:** AARP Driving safety class. The cost is \$25. Call 402-731-7210 for more information.

- **Monday & Thursday (beginning July 11):** Tai Chi class @ 10 a.m.

- **July 13:** The Merry-makers present music by Louis Watkins @ 11 a.m.

- **Fridays:** Movies @ 12:30 p.m. **July 1:** *The Patriot*. **July 8:** *Dirty Dancing*. **July 15:** *How the West Was*

Won. **July 22:** *Ben-Hur*. **July 29:** *Avengers*.

The center will be closed on July 4.

Call 402-731-7210 for more information.

THE SALVATION ARMY’S

SUMMER FAN PROGRAM



June 6 - September 2, 2022

What to bring with you:

- 1) Photo ID
- 2) Social Security Card or Birth Certificate
- 3) Proof of address within the last 30 days

Anyone in need is eligible, but special preference will be given to adults 50 and older and those that are disabled.

Questions? Call 402-898-5860

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“Loved the staff who took great care of mom.”

“Thank you for being there when we needed you!”
- R. Taylor

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Luncheon honors FGP volunteers who bounced back in 2022

Bounce Back (from COVID 19) was the theme of the Foster Grandparent Program's 2022 recognition luncheon held last month at the D. C. Centre, 11830 Stonegate Dr.

Sponsored locally by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging since 1976, the FGP is a national program of AmeriCorps Seniors.

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.

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 receive a \$3.15 an hour tax-free stipend, mileage reimbursement, an annual physical examination, supplemental accident insurance coverage, and other benefits including the annual recognition luncheon.

The stipend does not interfere with rent, disability,

Medicaid, or other benefits.

During the last year, ENOA's Foster Grandparents provided 16,000 hours of volunteer service in their communities.

Highlights of the luncheon included a welcome from FGP Coordinator Abigail Wayman, a delicious chicken dinner, entertainment by the legendary Johnny Gomez, a

keynote address by Dr. Julie Masters, Professor and Terry Haney Chair of Gerontology at the University of Nebraska Omaha, a salute to the FGP's advisory council and volunteer stations, and the recognition of 53 Foster Grandparents and eight retired Foster Grandparents.

For more information about becoming a Foster Grandparent, please call 402-444-6536.



Johnny Gomez provided the entertainment.



Keynote speaker Dr. Julie Masters.



Essie White has been a Foster Grandparent for three years.



Dianna Moore, an FGP volunteer for 11 years, sang at the luncheon.

Old Hollywood theme of annual SCP recognition event

A star-studded cast featuring (photos of) Old Hollywood icons like Pearl Bailey, Paul Newman, Rita Moreno, and Marlon Brando was on hand last month at the DC Centre, 11830 Stonegate Dr. to honor 49 Senior Companion Program volunteers, 13 retired Senior Companions, and four deceased SCP volunteers at the Senior Companion Program's 2022 recognition luncheon.

Sponsored locally since 1976 by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, the Senior Companion Program is a national AmeriCorps Seniors program.



The SCP's Robert Bass (right) with Larry Cornelius from the Ambassador Omaha.



Brando with (from left): the SCP's Doris Shelton, Valora Mapp, and Cheryl Thornton.

age, and other benefits including the annual recognition luncheon.

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

During the last year Senior Companions provided more than 52,000 hours of volunteer service to 102 clients.

In addition to honoring the volunteers, the event featured a welcome from SCP Coordinator Beth Paleogos, entertainment by vocalist Ben Tomasello sponsored by the Merymakers, a delicious meal, a keynote address by Dr. Julie Masters, Professor and Terry Haney Chair of Gerontology at the University of Nebraska Omaha, and closing remarks by ENOA's Director of Volunteer Services Mary Parker.

UNO Department of Gerontology Chair Dr. Chris Kelly, the retiring chair of the SCP's Advisory Council, was also honored for his service to the program.

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

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.

SCP 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, Senior Companions receive a \$3.15 an hour tax-free stipend, mileage reimbursement, an annual physical examination, supplemental accident insurance cover-



SCP Coordinator Beth Paleogos received a bouquet of flowers.



Director of Volunteer Services Mary Parker (as Charlie Chaplin).



Retiring SCP Advisory Council Chair Dr. Chris Kelly with (from left): SCP Advisory Council Vice-Chair Nicole Chirpy, SCP Coordinator Beth Paleogos, and SCP Specialist Theresa McKee.

The application deadline is July 15, 2022.

Call 402-444-6513 for more information.
JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN!



- The Creighton University Medical Center-Bergan Mercy Hospital wants volunteers to take a dessert cart to new

- 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.
- Boys Town is looking for volunteers to help out at its Visitors Center and Hall of History Museum.

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Carolyn juggles work, school, caregiving roles to earn degree



While earning her degree, Rogers worked 40 hours a week, took 12 hours of classes each semester, and was her mother’s primary caregiver.

On May 13, 2022 more than 1,800 students graduated from the University of Nebraska Omaha. While each of these men and women has a special story, perhaps none is more unique than the journey Carolyn Rogers followed to earn her diploma.

Rogers graduated with a 3.5 Grade Point Average and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Multi-Disciplinary Studies with an emphasis on Gerontology 48 years after first enrolling at UNO.

Born and raised in Omaha, Carolyn – the youngest of four children in her family – attended Howard Kennedy Elementary School before graduating from Omaha Central High School in 1974.

The autumn after high school, Rogers began classes at UNO majoring in art. “I was very good at art, but that’s not what I wanted to do,” she said during a recent interview.

Carolyn had eyes on earning a degree in geology but was discouraged by her mother, Marjorie Allen, who said, “Girls are not geologists.”

At age 20, Rogers married Willie Pugh, dropped out of college, and began a long career in the insurance industry starting in the mail room and ending as a claims examiner.

After being laid off by an insurance company, Carolyn went to work at UNO in 2016 working the 3 to 11:30 a.m. shift weekdays as a custodian.

Inspired by her work environment and told by a supervisor about UNO’s tuition assistance program for employees, Rogers decided to go back to college in 2017.

“I wanted to be an example to my son and my future grandkids,” she said.

Carolyn’s son, Enoch, is a graphic designer in Omaha.

During the ensuing five years, Rogers worked 40 hours a week at UNO, took 12 hours of online classes each semester, completed a 156-hour practicum at Omaha’s Elk Ridge Village Senior Living Community, was her mother’s primary caregiver, and slept when her schedule allowed.

Carolyn began the second phase of her college days by pursuing a degree in non-profit management and emergency management through the College of Business Administration.

One morning while cleaning UNO’s College of Public Affairs and Community Service building, Rogers talked with Dr. Julie Masters, then chair of the university’s Department of Gerontology. Masters encouraged Carolyn

to take an Introduction to Gerontology class.

Rogers soon became enthralled with gerontology (the study of old age, the process of aging, and the unique problems of older adults).

“They (the instructors) were talking about me,” Carolyn said.

Working, caregiving, and taking classes full time took a toll on Rogers. “I often fell asleep while I studied, but I was determined to get my degree.”

In May, Rogers went through UNO’s graduation ceremonies at the Baxter Arena.

“It was unreal. I did this. I’m really proud of myself,” she said.

Carolyn, her son, and 94-year-old mother celebrated the achievement with dinner at the Golden Corral.

Rogers’ and her efforts have made quite an impact on members of UNO’s Department of Gerontology faculty.

“Carolyn is someone whose life has been filled with many challenges and opportunities. Her caring and concern for others has led her to further her education to continue to make a difference in the lives of many,” Dr. Masters said.

“While most would see aging as a time to slow down, Carolyn has chosen a different path. All of us – especially those nearing retirement age – can learn from her desire to never give up and never stop giving. She embodies the words of Bishop Robert Barron who said, ‘Your life is not about you.’”

Rogers dedication and commitment were also noticed by Dr. Chris Kelly, chair of UNO’s Department of Gerontology.

“Carolyn is one of the first people I see every day when I come to work. She always has a smile and a wry comment. I’ve come to appreciate not only her kindness and sense of humor, but also her strong work ethic and character.

“When I learned she was pursuing her degree with an emphasis on gerontology, I was not surprised. She has always demonstrated a keen intellect and a genuine interest in the study of aging. I’m also not surprised she has seen this journey to its conclusion.

“I am proud of her achievement, and I am

happy for my friend. Carolyn’s story is part of what makes UNO such a special place.”

Heather Ford, an academic advisor, program coordinator, and adjunct professor in UNO’s Department of Gerontology said it’s an honor to know Rogers.

“She is truly an inspiring individual. Carolyn has a remarkable work ethic and does everything with grace and kindness. She works incredible hours, cares for her mother, earns excellent grades, maintains a positive outlook, and is committed to lifelong learning even though she has so many responsibilities demanding her time.”

Rogers’ plans include earning her master’s degree in gerontology and owning/managing an assisted living community some day.

This recent college graduate has some advice for others: “Focus on what you want. Don’t let people discourage you. Everyone has something inside that needs to come out. With some people that something comes out later in life.”



Carolyn’s plans include earning her master’s degree in gerontology from UNO.