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MINNESOTA RIVER AREA AGENCY ON AGING®, INC.

# MNRAAA NEWS

## From Our Executive Director

Dear Readers:

May is **Older Americans Month**, a perfect opportunity to show appreciation for the older adults in our area. Since 1963, communities across the nation have joined in the annual commemoration of **Older Americans Month** – a proud tradition that shows our nation’s commitment to celebrating the contributions and achievements of older Americans.

The theme for **Older Americans Month 2012 – Never Too Old to Play!** – puts a spotlight on the important role older adults play in sharing their experience, wisdom, and understanding, and passing on that knowledge to other generations in a variety of significant ways. The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. ( M N R A A A ) recognizes the value



that older adults continue to bring to our communities through spirited participation in social and faith groups, service organizations, and other activities.

As significant numbers of baby-boomers reach retirement age, many communities have increased their efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for older adults –

many of whom remain physically and socially active through their 80s and beyond. Current trends show that people over age 60 account for an ever-growing percentage of participants in community service positions, faith-based organizations and online social networking, as well as arts and recreational groups.

Lifelong participation in social, creative, and physical activities has proven health benefits, including retaining mobility, muscle mass, and cognitive abilities. But older adults are not the only ones who benefit

from their engagement in community life. Studies show their interactions with family, friends, and neighbors across generations enrich the lives of everyone involved. Young people who have significant relationships with a grandparent or elder report that these relationships helped shape their values, goals, and life choices and gave them a sense of identity and roots.

While MNRAAA provides services, support, and resources to older Americans year-round, **Older Americans Month 2012** is

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**Mission Statement**

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. is the gateway to resources for older adults, caregivers and service providers in the twenty-seven counties of southwest Minnesota.

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a great opportunity to show special appreciation for the older adults in our twenty-seven county service area. We have numerous reasons to celebrate them and we encourage each of you to join us in the national celebration of **Older Americans Month 2012!**

In celebration,  
*Linda Giersdorf*



## Now is the time to Share Minnesota and Volunteer!

The Senior LinkAge Line® - A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 1-800-333-2433 can help you find the volunteer opportunity that meets your needs and sparks your passion!

There are so many reasons to volunteer: learn a new skill or hobby; get more involved in your community; meet new people; gain a sense of achievement; be a community leader; transition into retirement; enhance your network; inspire other people; and find creative ways to put your talents to work.

By calling the Senior LinkAge Line® - A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 1-800-333-2433 an expert can help you find the volunteer opportunity that sparks your interest and your passion. Then get to a volunteer organization will find special opportunity y o u r



Some things to think about before you call the Senior LinkAge Line® - A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 1-800-333-2433 to **Share Minnesota and Volunteer.**: what are you interested in? How many hours can you volunteer? Are you looking for a volunteer position that pays a stipend? What are your skills and talents you would like to share with others? Whether it is your ideas, your skills, your comfort or your time, there is a place for you to Share Minnesota and Volunteer! Call the Senior LinkAge Line® - A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 1-800-333-2433 now!



A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors

## 2013 TITLE III FUNDING CYCLE

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. (MNRAAA) is authorized under Title III of the Older Americans Act to award grants/contracts to local public and/or non-profit organizations to develop and expand services for older people (60+) and their caregivers. Funds are to be used to expand the range of community-based programs and services designed to maintain the independence of older persons in a home environment, to fill gaps in existing services and to contribute to the development of a comprehensive and coordinated system of services.

Information on MNRAAA's 2013 Title III Funding Cycle will be released June 4, 2012 at [www.mnraaa.org](http://www.mnraaa.org).

## New Staff Spotlight!



[Jennifer Pieske](#) is an Information and Assistance Specialist. She provides individualized, in-depth, phone-based assistance to older adults, caregivers, service providers and others. She also works with the Long Term Care Consultation Expansion program that helps people and their families find local resources and make decisions about long-term care options. Jen has been with Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. (MNRAAA) since October 2011.

[Kylie Henkel](#) and [Lisa Ackerman](#) are MinnesotaHelp Network™ Return to Community (RTC) Specialists. They conduct 90 day assessments on individuals who have been discharged to the community from a nursing home. With the individual's consent, they provide phone-based follow-up for up to 5 years, including phone-based long-term care options counseling and resource information to empower the

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# CAREGIVER

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## Caregiver Respite: Enjoy a Guilt-free Time-out

Why is it that the words “respite” and “guilt” seem to go hand in hand? Why do caregivers feel they are somehow failing their loved one by admitting that they need help, need time to recharge their batteries, or just need time to play a bit? Perhaps because so many still hold on to the myth that says the caregiver has to be all things to all people.

The truth is that no matter how hard we try, we are not a super-duper caregiver extraordinaire. We are human with all the same needs and feelings as every other person in our lives. And, just like everyone else we need to take time to smell the roses.

Respite care provides caregivers the opportunity to:

- Take a vacation
- Have a weekend getaway
- Attend to home or work responsibilities that have been building up
- Recharge their energy to be better prepared to provide the attention and patience required on a daily basis

Think about these principals to ensure your guilt-free respite:

- I am entitled to take care of myself
- I am worthy of a break
- I am showing my commitment to my caregiver role when I take steps like respite care to ensure that continued quality care is delivered to my loved one
- It is OK to relax and enjoy other aspects of my life
- It is OK to take a break and recharge my energies
- It is OK to maintain as much normalcy in my life as possible
- It is OK to continue to dream
- If roles were reversed, there is no question I would want my loved one to have respite
- It is right and responsible of me to also have respite



Continued from Page 2 Staff Spotlight

consumer to remain as independent as possible. They work with individuals from throughout Minnesota and have been with MNRAAA since November 2011. Lisa will be transitioning into the Community Living Specialist position for the MNRAAA area in May.



[Jasmine Lund](#) is an Information and Assistance Specialist and provides individualized, in-depth, phone-based assistance to older adults, caregivers, service providers and others. Working with the Long-Term Care Consultation Expansion program, Jasmine helps people and their families find local resources and make decisions about long-term care options. Jasmine also assists consumers through MinnesotaHelp NOW! live chats and secure e-mail questions. Jasmine has been with MNRAAA since November 2011.

L to R: Kylie Henkel, Jasmine Lund, Jennifer Pieske, Lisa Ackerman



## NOTEWORTHY

MNRAAA volunteer, Marilyn Dundas, attended an event sponsored by Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

A living room discussion was held on March 23 in Spring Lake Park at the home of Linda Hamilton. The event was sponsored by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to highlight the second anniversary of the Affordable Care Act. Secretary Sebelius was accompanied by Governor Mark Dayton, Senator Al Franken and Representative Betty McCollum.

Secretary Sebelius met with half a dozen women from Minnesota who have benefited from the Affordable Care Act. One of the women participating in the discussion was Marilyn Dundas, a Senior LinkAge Line® volunteer from the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. in Mankato. Each woman was given an opportunity to share their story during the event; which was described as a “living room chat”. Marilyn shared her experience with the Affordable Care Act and how it has helped her save several thousand dollars every year because of changes to the Medicare Part D donut hole.



Pictured above: Marilyn Dundas & Governor Mark Dayton

## Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs in 2012

Anyone who has Medicare can get Medicare Part D Prescription drug coverage. Some people with limited income and resources are eligible for Extra Help; assistance to help pay for the monthly premiums, deductibles and prescription co-payments. People with the lowest incomes will get the most help. You should consider applying for the extra help if:

- Your individual income is \$16,752 a year or less and your resources are \$13,070 or less
- Your income as a married couple is \$22,692 a year or less and your resources are \$26,120 or less

Life insurance policies and income regularly received from someone else to help pay household expenses do not count as income. If you want more information about how to apply for Extra Help call the Senior LinkAge Line®: A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 1-800-333-2433.

The Senior LinkAge Line® is a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging. Specialists provide one-to-one assistance with helping older adults age well and live well. The Senior LinkAge Line® is the federally-designated State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for Minnesota and is the place to call for Medicare and health insurance issues. Call 1-800-333-2433 for assistance or go to [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info)® to chat live with a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist.



**A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors**



# never too old to play

older americans month 2012



[www.OlderAmericansMonth.org](http://www.OlderAmericansMonth.org)



## Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program



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As part of National Nutrition Month, the Administration on Aging (AoA) joins the national aging services network in celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program. In communities across the country, older adults join friends at a congregate site to enjoy well balanced meals, while homebound seniors are able to receive a meal delivered to their home.



Millions of older adults suffer from hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity. For many, the meal they receive from the OAA Nutrition Program is their only meal of the day. Hunger does not discriminate; it targets individuals of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, and socio-economic levels. In 2010, the United States Department of Agriculture found that about 4.6 million older adults experienced some form of food insecurity. Also in 2010, an AoA survey of program participants found that twelve percent of home delivered meals recipients and six percent of congregate meal participants had to choose between buying food and paying for their rent or utilities.

Since the program's implementation in 1972, eight billion meals have been served to older Americans, helping them to eat more healthfully and allowing them to remain active in their homes and communities. The OAA Nutrition Program provides the opportunity for individuals to socialize with their friends, volunteer to help others and check on their neighbors to see if they are okay.

To read Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee's entire message on the 40th Anniversary of the OAA Nutrition Program, go to [http://aoa.gov/aoaroot/Press\\_Room/Observances/2012/Nutrition\\_Month.aspx](http://aoa.gov/aoaroot/Press_Room/Observances/2012/Nutrition_Month.aspx)

To learn more about the AoA Nutrition Program, go to the Nutrition Services web page at [http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HCLTC/Nutrition\\_Services/index.aspx](http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Nutrition_Services/index.aspx)

### Providing OAA Nutrition Services in the MNRAAA service area are:

Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.

320.269.7512 or [www.prairiefive.com](http://www.prairiefive.com)

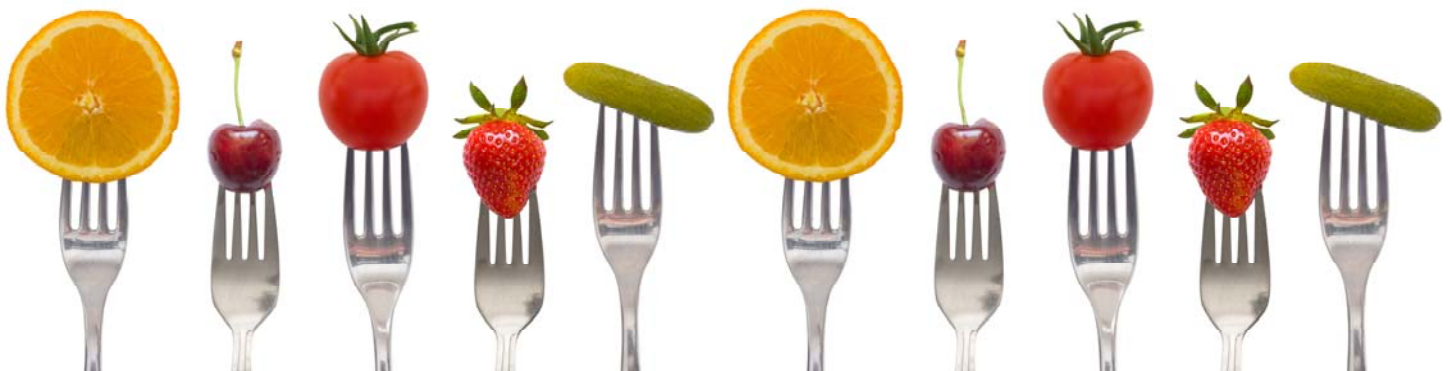
(Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle,  
Swift, Yellow Medicine Counties)

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

218.233.7521 or [www.lssmn.org](http://www.lssmn.org)

(Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Kandiyohi,  
Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Meeker, Murray,  
Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock,  
Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan Counties)

For information on nutrition services in your community contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 or [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info).



# Our Staff

## Mankato Office:

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## Southeast Area



L to R Back Row: Heather Lincoln, Robin Thompson, Erica Gahlon, Stephanie McCabe  
L to R Front Row: Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, Linda Giersdorf, Elaine Spain (Gail Gilman-Waldner not pictured)

## Slayton Office:

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- Kylie Henkel, Client Services Center/Return to Community  
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## Southwest Area



L to R Back Row: (Danielle Comstock, formerly of MnRAAA), Julie Stewart, Linda Tobias, Nicole Brandt  
L to R Front Row: Gail Radke, Robin Weis, Katie Gillette (Lisa Ackerman, Jennifer Pieske, Jasmine Lund and Kylie Henkel not pictured)

## Willmar Office:

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- Ashley Ronglien, Senior Outreach Specialist  
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## Northwest & Northeast Area



L to R: Ashley Ronglien, Kate Selseth

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*Return Service Request*

**Your Opinion Matters!**

Please share your feedback with us. If you would like to read about specific topics in future MNRAAA News or to request MNRAAA News by email, contact us at: [erica@rnc.org](mailto:erica@rnc.org) or 507.389.8879



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- Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, *Secretary*  
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