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From Our Executive Director

Dear *Summertime* Readers:

Many of you are probably familiar with the lyrics from "Summertime" by George Gershwin – "Summertime and the livin' is easy, fish are jumpin', and the cotton is high". Or there's "Summertime" recorded by Mungo Jerry – "In the summertime when the weather is high, you can chase right up and touch the sky". Or there's also "Summertime" sung by Kenny Chesney – "Summertime is finally here, that old ballpark, man, is back in gear out on 49, man I can see the lights". All of these songs seem particularly appropriate today as I write this letter. It's 98 degrees outside and the humidity is 74 percent. Yes, it's definitely *summertime*.

Summertime is a time of family reunions, picnics, baseball games, weddings, vacations, mosquitos and this year, the Summer Olympics!

Even though it's *summertime*, the staff of MNRAAA continues to be very busy. So, take a few minutes, read what's been happening at MNRAAA and as always, feel free to contact us if you have questions or would like additional information. And no matter how you've been spending your *summertime*, I hope it's been enjoyable!



LTCCE 2.0 & MinnesotaHelp Network™ Tools Update Road Show

During the 2012 legislative session, changes were made to the Long Term Care Consultation Expansion service. Presentations are scheduled across Minnesota for targeted audiences to attend and hear more about the changes as well as hear how the business process model was developed to account for these changes, to be implemented beginning October 1, 2012. Contact Robin at robint@rndc.org for additional information.

September 6 (9:00-11:00AM)

Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center
3rd Floor Education Room
300 South Bruce Street, Marshall MN

September 7 (9:00-11:00 AM)

Mankato Clinic (Madison East Mall Location)
Conference Room (next to Lorraine Shop)
1400 Madison Avenue, Mankato MN

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.

Online Application Now Available for Public Assistance Programs in Minnesota

Minnesotans in need of health care, nutrition assistance and emergency assistance can now apply online through ApplyMN at www.applymn.dhs.mn.gov. This new site allows Minnesotans for the first time to fill out a single application online for a majority of public programs. Every month more than 60,700 Minnesotans apply for health care and other human service programs. ApplyMN is expected to improve access to various human service programs for low-income Minnesotans. This new tool allows you to fill out an application on the Internet and immediately submit it electronically. Applications can continue to be submitted in paper form. For more information on this new tool or to receive assistance in completing an application for public assistance programs, contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433.

The Senior LinkAge Line®: One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors 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™ to chat live with a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist.



A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors



Olympic Fun Facts Quiz

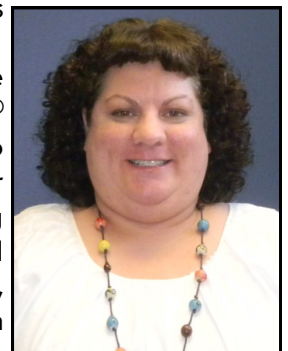
- Which country won the most medals in the first Olympic Summer Games in 1896?
Italy, Greece, France or Germany
- Chamonix, France hosted the first Winter Olympic Games. What year were they held?
1916, 1920, 1924 or 1928
- Name one of three continents that have never hosted the Olympics?
North America, South America, Africa or Australia
- How many times has London hosted an Olympics?
Once, Twice, Three or Four
- When were the first Summer Games televised?
1940, 1950, 1960 or 1970

Continued on page 4.



New Staff Spotlight!

Sarah Reiman is the Volunteer Coordinator for MNRAAA and offices out of the Mankato Office. She provides coordination of the operations and activities of the MNRAAA Senior LinkAge Line® (SLL) volunteers. Sarah also assists consumers as a Senior Outreach Specialist providing one-on-one information and assistance to older adults, caregivers and persons with disabilities enrolled in Medicare. Sarah joined the MNRAAA team in May.



Caregiver Corner

Caregiver Stress

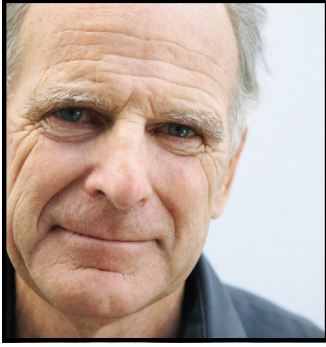
More than one quarter of the adult population (26.6%) or 50 million people have provided care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend during the past year. Sixty-one percent of

“intense” caregivers (those providing at least 21 hours of care a week) have suffered from depression. It is no surprise that caregiver stress or burnout is becoming a critical issue.

Caregiving is not something that people plan on or sign up for. It is a huge responsibility. Keeping the caregiver healthy (physically, mentally, and emotionally) is vital. Try to find the right balance in your life that allows you to care for your loved one while caring for yourself.

Following are some helpful tips for getting your life in balance.

- When well-meaning people offer to help, accept their help. Be specific in things you could use help with. Now is not the time to show the world how strong you are. You will only burn out quicker without help.
- Watch out for signs of depression. Get professional help if you need to.
- Educate yourself about your loved one's condition. Information is empowering!
- Trust your gut feelings. If something doesn't sound right to you, keep asking questions until you are satisfied that the best care is being administered.
- Find other caregivers to connect with. There are many caregiver websites and support groups that can be found. If there are none in your area, start your own. You need somebody to talk to that understands what you are going through.
- Be kind to yourself. Even if you only take a ten-minute walk around the block to alleviate some stress, DO IT. A caregiver with a lower stress level makes a much better caregiver. Getting enough sleep, exercise, and eating balanced meals reduces stress.
- If you are caring for a parent and have siblings, be vocal about what they can do to help. Some people are not comfortable with the day-to-day care but they might be willing to grocery shop for you, pick up medications, or do a doctor's appointment. Don't be a martyr. Your emotional health cannot take it. Face it and get on with it.
- Take charge of your life and continue to do things that you find relaxing or pleasurable. If a loved one's disability always takes center stage instead of your needs, you will become a resentful caregiver which is not good for anyone.
- Write down things to keep your head uncluttered. Having ongoing lists of medications your loved one is taking will not only alleviate the stress of trying to remember what and when, but it is also a valuable tool when visiting the doctor. It's all written out and accessible. Doctors are often rushed and cannot wait around while you try to remember which medications are causing what side effects, etc. Keep it simple and easy on yourself in ways that you can.
- Keep your sense of humor. It's the most important tool you have and it's free. Humor can be found in the most surprising places. Laughter is good for the soul.
- Know your limitations! Don't let guilt get in the way of making the best decision for your family member and yourself. Not everyone can be a caregiver no matter how good their intentions might be. If you cannot be a caregiver due to an emotional, physical, financial or locational burden, you do have choices. You cannot help another if you yourself need help. Medical needs might warrant the need for assisted living or long term care. If you must find alternative living arrangements, make sure they are ones you can live with and serve the best interest of your loved one! Stay involved and vigilant that the care remains good.



Flu Season Already?

Each year in the United States, more than nine out of ten flu-related deaths and more than six out of ten flu-related hospital stays occur in people aged 65 and older.

Older adults are more vulnerable to influenza (commonly called “flu”), a serious infectious disease that can lead to hospitalization, pneumonia, and even death. Influenza immunization is the best way to avoid the flu.

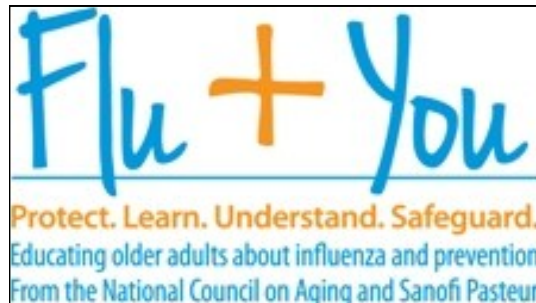
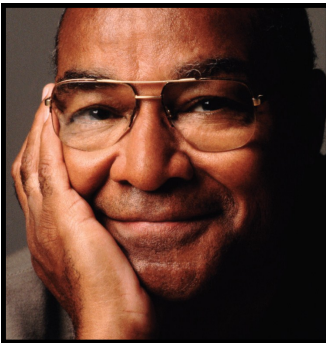
Flu + You seeks to educate and empower older adults and their caregivers about the dangers of flu, the importance of annual vaccination and available vaccination options. Visit www.ncoa.org/flu for facts and to learn more about influenza in older adults and help spread the news to others.

Protect. Learn. Understand. Safeguard.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends an annual flu vaccination for everyone 6 months of age and older.

An annual flu shot is safe, effective, and the best way to help protect against flu. Getting the flu shot protects you and also helps prevent the spread of the flu to others you care about, including family members and friends who may not have gotten their flu shot.

For older adults, especially people aged 65 and older, an annual flu shot is critical and might even be life-saving.



Help Protect Yourself

If you're aged 65 or older, you have two options for your annual flu shot:

- The traditional flu shot, or
- A higher dose flu shot designed specifically for people aged 65 and older.

Medicare Part B covers both of these options.

Talk to your health care provider today about the dangers of the flu, the benefits of the flu shot, and the best option to meet your needs.

Flu + You is an educational program from NCOA and Sanofi Pasteur.



We're on the Web!
Find us on
Facebook & Twitter



Olympic Fun Facts continued from page 2.

Source: www.factmonster.com

1. Greece, they won 47 medals
2. Chamonix, France hosted the first Winter Olympics in 1924
3. Africa, South America and Antarctica have never hosted the Olympic Games
4. London has hosted three times, 1900, 1948 and 2012
5. First Summer Games were televised in 1960 in Rome, Italy

Transportation for America's Veterans and Their Families

The Department of Veterans Affairs -- commonly called the VA -- was launched in the 1920s with the words of President Abraham Lincoln as its inspiration: "...to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan." Today, that care must include the ability to connect to all of the health care and social services available to veterans, and to ensure that for those who have given so much, basic mobility never impedes overall quality of life.

Access to reliable and affordable transportation is an essential ingredient to empower today's service members, veterans, and their families to participate fully and successfully in their communities and achieve economic stability. Many families are struggling to meet mobility needs with one or more family members deployed overseas. Moreover, our fighting forces returning from overseas face a range of physical, mental health and economic challenges that directly affect their families as they strive to rejoin their communities. Over 20% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have disabilities, over 10% of all veterans earn low incomes and nearly half live in rural areas where transportation options are limited.



MNRAAA, in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the State of Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, is engaged in a project to expand the Senior LinkAge Line® (also known as the MinnesotaHelp™ Network) to provide a direct link between call-center staff and transportation providers throughout the 27 counties in southwest Minnesota. Through technology upgrades, call center staff will have a direct link to the transportation

provider's mobility manager or dispatcher to gather the information that the caller is requesting. If necessary, the technology will also provide the ability to directly and securely transfer the information about the caller, provide details about the information already gathered, and transfer the call

directly to the transportation provider's mobility manager or dispatcher for more in-depth assistance.

The service infrastructure created by this initiative will not only improve access and mobility options for veterans and military families but it will also improve and increase coordinated transportation resources for other community members, including people at risk of institutionalization who would prefer to live as independently as possible.

Could You Save a Life?

More than 99 million individuals in the U.S. are 50 years of age and over. If the majority of people in this age group signed up to be organ donors, imagine how many lives could be saved!

People of all ages can sign up to be donors. In their 50s ... 60s ... even into their 70s and older. And, people over 50 can be transplant recipients as well.

Here are some statistics and facts about organ donation for people over 50:

- Your age doesn't make you ineligible to sign up, nor do you have to be in perfect health. Your ability to donate is determined at the time of death.
- Organ and tissue transplants are needed by people in every corner of America. People of all ages, infants to grandparents, are on the national transplant waiting list.
- According to the 2005 National Survey of Organ and Tissue Donation Attitudes and Behaviors, conducted by The Gallup Organization, 20.13% of people over 65 years of age mistakenly think they are too old to donate an organ while 11.73% believe they are too old to receive one.
- As of April 13, 2012, according to Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, there are 51,718 people between 50 and 64 years old on the national waiting list and 21,172 people over 65 years old on the national waiting list.

Visit www.organdonor.gov to learn more about being an organ donor.

organdonor.gov

DONATE THE GIFT OF LIFE

Our Staff

Mankato Office:

10 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 3 • PO Box 3323

Mankato, MN 56002-3323

Ph: 507.389.8879 • Fx: 507.387.7105 • Hrs: 8 AM - 4:30 PM, M-F

Linda Giersdorf, Executive Director

linda@rncd.org 507.389.8866

Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, Grant/Contract Manager

rhonda@rncd.org 507.389.8862

Erica Gahlon, Administrative Assistant

erica@rncd.org 507.389.8879

Robin Thompson, Senior Outreach Specialist

robint@rncd.org 1.800.333.2433 x:82016

Gail Gilman-Waldner, Program Developer

ggwaldner@rncd.org 507.389.8869

Elaine Spain, Program Developer

espain@rncd.org 507.389.8860

Stephanie McCabe, Senior Outreach Specialist

stephanie@rncd.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82004

Heather Lincoln, Community Living Specialist

heather@rncd.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82007

Sarah Reiman, Volunteer Coordinator

sarahr@rncd.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82026

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 and Sarah Reiman not pictured)

Slayton Office:

2401 Broadway Ave., Suite 2 • Slayton, MN 56172

Ph: 507.836.8547 • Fx: 507.836.8866

Hours: 8 AM - 4:30 PM • Monday - Friday

Robin Weis, Aging Program Director

rlinkage@swrdc.org 507.836.1642

Gail Radke, Contact Center Coordinator/Sr. Outreach Specialist

gailr@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82006

Linda Tobias, Client Services Center

lindat@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82012

Julie Stewart, Information & Assistance Specialist

julies@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82008

Nicole Brandt, Information & Assistance Specialist

nicole@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82020

Katrina Gillette, Information & Assistance Specialist

katrina@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82022

Lisa Ackerman, Client Services Center/Return to Community

lisaa@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82017

Jen Pieske, Contact Center Staff

jenniferp@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82011

Jasmine Lund, Client Services Center / Return to Community

jasminel@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82025

Kylie Chandler, Client Services Center/Return to Community

kyliec@swrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82018

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 Chandler not pictured)

Willmar Office:

333 Sixth Street SW, Suite 2 • Willmar, MN 56201

Ph: 507.836.8547 • Fx: 507.836.8866

Hours: 8 AM - 4:30 PM • Monday - Friday

Kate Selseth, Aging Program Director

kate.selseth@mnrdc.org 320.235.8504 x: 251

Ashley Ronglien, Senior Outreach Specialist

ashley.ronglien@mnrdc.org 1.800.333.2433 x: 82024

Northwest & Northeast Area



L to R: Ashley Ronglien, Kate Selseth

Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc.

PO Box 3323

Mankato MN 56002-3323

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 or 507.389.8879



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|---|---|---|---|
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Worthington | • Bill Sauer
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