



# Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc.

# MnRAAA NEWS

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## In this Issue:

- May 2015:  
Older Americans Month
- Volunteers Stay Active with Outreach Activities
- Title III Spotlight Services: Wellspring's Family Caregiver Project
- Staff Announcements
- Minnesota Age & Disabilities Odyssey Conference
- 50+ Lifestyle Expo
- Become a Community for a Lifetime
- Caregiver Corner: Caregiver Respite
- Emergency Preparedness Apps
- Bone Health & Osteoporosis
- Mankato Office Construction Update
- Staff Directory
- 2015 White House Conference on Aging

## Mark Your Calendars:

- May 20 -  
Office Workshop  
Office Closed
- May 25 - Memorial Day  
Office Closed

Dear Readers,

May is Older Americans Month and this year's theme is "Get into the Act".

Older adults are a vital part of our society. Since 1963, communities across the country have shown their gratitude by celebrating Older Americans Month each May. The theme of this year's celebration is "Get into the Act," to focus on how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

The theme also reflects on the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Older Americans Act into law in July 1965. Since that time, the Act has provided a nationwide aging services network and funding that helps older adults live with dignity in the communities of their choice for as long as possible. These services include home delivered and congregate meals, caregiver support, community-based assistance, preventive health services, elder abuse prevention and much more.

By promoting and engaging in activity, wellness and inclusivity, more Americans than ever before can "Get into the Act." While MnRAAA provides services to older adults year-round, Older Americans Month offers an opportunity to emphasize how older adults can access the home- and community-based services they need to live independently in their communities. It is also an occasion to highlight how older adults are engaging with and making a difference in those communities.

I encourage you to take time to celebrate older adults and the people who serve and support them as powerful and vital individuals who greatly contribute to your community.

Sincerely,

**Linda Giersdorf**

*Executive Director* – MnRAAA  
507.389.8866 • [lindag@rndc.org](mailto:lindag@rndc.org)



## 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.

## Volunteers Stay Active with Outreach Activities

The new year has begun with a flurry of activity for MnRAAA volunteers and plans are under way to keep the momentum going as the year continues. Volunteers and staff started the year by doing outreach to all the pharmacies in MnRAAA's 27 county service area. Volunteers assembled outreach packets and hand-delivered them to their local pharmacist. The outreach packets included a letter to the pharmacist from the Senior LinkAge Line® (SLL), several Minnesota Health Care Choices books, MnRAAA and SLL outreach materials. When appropriate, SLL education was provided to pharmacy staff. It was encouraging to find that a majority of pharmacists already knew about the SLL. Plans are also underway to provide similar outreach this year to major employers and banks throughout our service area. Outreach to Downs Food Group in St. James led to an invitation for Debbie Bauleke, our Senior Outreach Specialist in Mankato, to provide several presentations for their employees.

Another project for the beginning of this year was doing an evaluation of MnRAAA's MinnesotaHelp

Network™ health insurance counseling sites. These sites are held monthly at designated locations and times throughout MnRAAA's service area. This allows Medicare beneficiaries, pre-beneficiaries, and caregivers an opportunity to meet with a trained SLL volunteer for assistance with Medicare, supplemental insurance, long-term care insurance and much more. Consumers can either walk-in during the designated time or call the SLL and schedule an appointment to guarantee an appointment time. After completing the evaluation, staff decided to move the two locations of counseling sites in Mankato to our office. This will provide a great opportunity for volunteers to have access to computers and educational materials. Staff will also be available, as needed, when they provide counseling.

A volunteer is available to provide in-person assistance at the MnRAAA office at 10 Civic Center Plaza (third floor) in Mankato on the first and third Thursday of each month from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM.

## Spotlight on Title III Services: Wellspring's Family Caregiver Project

Wellspring Faith in Action is an organization of neighbors helping neighbors with the mission of providing aid to the elderly, or those in difficult life circumstances, via a group of trained volunteers. To accomplish this mission, Wellspring provides friendly visiting, respite, transportation and caregiver support services to persons in Watonwan County.

In 2003, Wellspring was awarded a Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Services grant from the Region Nine Area Agency on Aging (predecessor to MnRAAA) for the Family Caregiver Project. Title III-E was a new source of funding under the federal Older Americans Act to support caregivers and extend the length of time they can provide care for a loved one at home. With ongoing Title III-E funding from MnRAAA, Wellspring has provided services to over 150 caregivers through support groups and

educational events.

"Caregiving is a long journey most of us will take at some point in our lives. We don't need to take this journey alone", says Wellspring program coordinator, Kim Askeland. "There are many resources available to caregivers; they just need to be willing to reach out for and accept help."



### **WELLSPRING** Faith In Action

108 8th Street South #7  
Saint James, MN 56081  
(507) 375-1276

If you are a caregiver in Watonwan county you can contact Wellspring's Family Caregiver Project at 507.375.1276 or [wellspringfia@co.watonwan.mn.us](mailto:wellspringfia@co.watonwan.mn.us).

## Staff Announcements

Kelly Wolle joined MnRAAA in April as an Administrative & Communications Assistant in our Mankato office. Kelly has worked in the printing and promotional products industry for the last 16 years with a background in Graphics Production and Data Analysis. Kelly lives in Mankato with her husband and her 7 year old son.

Judy Blume started three years ago as a seasonal staff person helping with Medicare calls during the Annual Medicare Open Enrollment Period. In January 2015, Judy started a new position as an Administrative Assistant for the Return to Community Program. Judy's main duty is making initial phone calls to consumers who were naturally discharged from the nursing home, but declined assistance from a community living specialist. Judy is based out of the Mankato office.

Bridget Schwebach joined MnRAAA in March as the Senior Outreach Specialist for the Northern Area with an office located in Montevideo. Bridget is re-entering the workforce after taking some time off to be with her children and provide in-home family child care. Prior to this, Bridget worked as a Long Term Care Case Manager/Care Coordinator for Lac qui Parle County. Bridget lives in Ortonville with her husband and five children, ages 13, 12, 9, 7, and 2.



**Minnesota Age & Disabilities Odyssey Conference**

*“The Odyssey Continues: Person-Centered Perspectives”*

June 15 & 16, 2015  
Duluth Entertainment Convention Center  
Duluth, MN

Join over 1,000 professionals and advocates for the 2015 Minnesota Age and Disabilities Odyssey Conference, sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Board on Aging.

Registration is now available for individuals, groups, presenters and grantees. Hurry, early bird conference registration closes May 31.

Learn more and register at:  
<http://bit.ly/2015Odyssey>

## 11th Annual 50+ Lifestyle Expo

The 50+ Lifestyle Expo provides upbeat information, products and services that promote a healthy, safe and active lifestyle for people over the age of 50 and their families. An extensive range of services and products will be offered including free health screenings, life planning, various presentations and more.

Vendor booths will be available to the public from 2 - 6 PM and the keynote speaker, Carl Eller (former Minnesota Viking) will be featured at 6 PM.

Tuesday, May 12, 2015 from 2 - 7 PM  
Verizon Wireless Civic Center, Mankato, MN

This event is FREE & open to the public.

*Stop in and visit our booth!*

Additional Expo highlights include, at no cost:

- Medical screenings
- 100+ Exhibition Hall
- Admission
- Speakers
- Door prize drawings
- Snacks & beverages
- Parking
- Shuttle service

# Caregiver Corner

## 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 extraordinary. 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.

The thought of going away for even a brief time for many caregivers is fraught with fears of disaster and chaos because we are not there to oversee everything. Many caregivers think that no one can replace what we do as caregivers to our family member or loved one.

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.

If you would like more information on *“Caregiver Respite – Enjoy a Guilt-free Time-out”* please feel free to contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1.800.333.2433.



A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors



**FALLS PREVENTION  
AWARENESS DAY**

The 2015 Falls Prevention Awareness Day is Wednesday, September 23, and the theme is “Take a Stand to Prevent Falls”.

## Become a “Community for a Lifetime”

Did you know that by 2020 there will be more people over 60 than children in school? By 2030, one in four people will be over the age of 65. This phenomenon is commonly characterized as “The Age Wave” because the population not only ages but also lives longer.

Communities throughout Minnesota can prepare for this demographic shift through intentional planning initiatives referred to as “Communities for a Lifetime.” Cities and their local leaders are critical in setting a vision for age-friendly communities and creating

effective policies, planning initiatives and citizen engagement opportunities. Municipalities are uniquely positioned to influence a wide spectrum of community domains such as: Public Safety; Government; Parks and Recreation; Planning; and Development.

MNRAAA staff can help you learn about the significant and unique challenges and opportunities of an aging population. For more information, please contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1.800.333.2433.

### Emergency Preparedness... There’s an app for that!



#### American Red Cross

Rather than just one app the Red Cross offers a whole series of apps including apps for First Aid, Blood Donation, Emergency, Flood, Tornado, Shelter, Pet First Aid and more. Each app includes emergency notifications and step by step instructions on how to prepare your family for an emergency. There are even interactive quizzes to help you prepared for the real thing.



#### FEMA

The FEMA app features preparedness information for all different types of disasters, an interactive checklist for emergency kits and information on how to stay safe and recover after a disaster. There is also information on how to plan for an emergency meeting location.



#### Pocket First Aid & CPR

Developed by the American Red Heart Association, this app includes hundreds of pages of instructions on what to do in emergency situations, including dealing with choking, burns, CPR, seizures, diabetic emergencies and more.



#### ICE Standard

Developed by About the Kids Foundation, the ICE Standard is an emergency card app, which lists an individual’s complete medical history, emergency contacts, insurance details, blood type, and more. This app features a unique color-coding plan to quickly allow first responders to determine if there are any serious medical issues.



#### Minnesota 511

Minnesota 511 is the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s official traffic and traveler information resource. This app provides statewide, real-time traffic information for interstate, U.S. routes and state highways in Minnesota.

## Bone Health and Osteoporosis

Myths and Realities of Bone Health: Over several decades, scientists have learned a significant amount about the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of bone disease. Following are some myths about bone health.



**Myth:** Only a small segment of the population suffers from osteoporosis or other bone disease.



**Reality:** Osteoporosis is a silent condition that affects millions of Americans. Ten million Americans over age 50 have osteoporosis, the most common bone disease. Another 34 million Americans have low bone mass. If we do not take immediate action, by 2020, half of all Americans over the age of 50 will have weak bones from osteoporosis and low bone mass.



**Myth:** Bone fractures from falls or injuries have nothing to do with osteoporosis.



**Reality:** Fractures in individuals over the age of 50 can be the first sign of weak bones from osteoporosis or low bone mass. Each year, 1.5 million older Americans suffer a fracture due to bone disease.



**Myth:** Once you get osteoporosis, nothing can be done to treat it.



**Reality:** If diagnosed, osteoporosis can be treated with new drugs that can help prevent bone loss and rebuild bone. These can help to prevent life-threatening and painful fractures.



**Myth:** Osteoporosis is only a problem for older Caucasian women.



**Reality:** One of the most dangerous myths about osteoporosis is that only women need to worry about their bone health. Osteoporosis affects both men and women of all races. While bone weakness is manifested in older Americans, strong bones begin in childhood. Americans of all ages must take steps to protect their bone health.



**Myth:** Diagnosing osteoporosis or other bone diseases is both a lengthy and painful process.



**Reality:** Individuals can do a lot to promote their bone health, beginning in childhood and continuing into old age. With proper nutrition, physical activity and medical attention, Americans can have strong bones and live longer, healthier lives.

MnRAAA offers Matter of Balance classes to help you stay fit and prevent a fall. For more information feel free to contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1.800.333.2433.



**A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors**

### MANKATO OFFICE - CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Is a visit to the Mankato office in your near future? Visit <http://bit.ly/MKTOConstruction> for the latest updates on the construction in front of our office and where to find parking.

## Southeast Office Staff

10 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 3 • PO Box 3323 • Mankato, MN 56002

Ph: 507.389.8879 • Fx: 507.387.6223 • 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM, M-F

Linda Giersdorf, <i>Executive Director</i> .....	lindag@rncd.org.....	507.389.8866
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## Northern Office Staff

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Fx: 507.387.6223 • By Appointment Only

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## Southwest Office Staff

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**Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc.**

PO Box 3323  
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*Return Service Requested*

**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@rndc.org](mailto:erica@rndc.org) or 507.389.8879.

2015 WHITE HOUSE  
**CONFERENCE**  
*on AGING*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2015  
1:00 - 3:30 PM

REDWOOD AREA COMMUNITY CENTER  
901 E COOK ST., REDWOOD FALLS, MN

The White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) is a decennial event held to develop recommendations for the President and Congress on issues, policy and research in the field of aging.

The 2015 WHCOA themes are: Retirement Security, Healthy Aging, Long-term Services and Supports, and Elder Justice. Please plan on participating in MnRAAA's Listening Session to provide your input as to what the local, state or federal barriers or problems

are related to policy, programs and/or services within each of the four themes. You'll also be provided an opportunity to recommend local, state or federal solutions to existing or development of new policy, programs and/or services to overcome barriers or problems for each theme.

If you plan on attending, please contact Kelly at 507.389.8892 or [kelly@rndc.org](mailto:kelly@rndc.org). We look forward to seeing you!

**Our Board**

DuWayne Underthun.....	Willmar	Sharon Hollatz.....	Redwood Falls
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, <i>Secretary</i> .....	Atwater	James Broich, <i>Vice Chair</i> .....	Sleepy Eye
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