

# MINRAAA news

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging provides advocacy, information, resources and assistance so that older adults can maintain the lifestyle of their choice.



*Staff from the Minnesota Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing speaking at the Spring MNRAAA Volunteer Quarterly Training.*

## Inside this Issue

Engage at Every Age.....	2
Senate Aging Committee's Fraud Hotline .....	3
Volunteer Quarterly Training .....	3
Memory Resources in Benson ....	4
New Staff.....	4
Sharing a Meal to Reduce Isolation .....	5
Program Development Leader Training Calendar .....	5
Living Well with Chronic Pain ....	6
Have you taken a look at Juniper? ....	7
Stay Connected with Juniper by Email.....	7
Farewell and Thank You .....	8
n4a Launches engAGED.....	9
Little Known Facts About Medicare .....	9
A Helping Hand to Get You Back Home .....	10
New Assistance Sites for People Who Speak Spanish & Somali .....	11
AARP Community Challenge Grants.....	11
MNRAAA 2018 Roadshows ....	12

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*MNRAAA offices will be closed on the following dates:*

- **May 18** (Staff Retreat)
- **May 28** (Memorial Day)
- **July 4** (Independence Day)



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on Aging (MNRAAA)**

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## Engage at Every Age

*Linda Giersdorf, Executive Director*



Welcome to the spring edition of MNRAAA news. I hope you will enjoy reading about what's happening at MNRAAA and find the updates we've included useful and worth sharing with others.

Across the country, older Americans – a rapidly growing population – are taking part in activities that promote wellness and social connection. They are sharing their wisdom and experience with future generations, and they are giving back to enrich their communities. They're working and volunteering, mentoring and learning, leading and engaging.

For 55 years, Older Americans Month has been observed to recognize older Americans and their contributions to communities. Led by the Administration for Community Living's Administration on Aging, it offers opportunities to hear from, support, and celebrate our nation's older adults.

This year's Older Americans Month theme, "Engage at Every Age," emphasizes the importance of being active and involved, no matter one's age. Individuals are never too old (or too young) to participate in activities that can enrich physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

MNRAAA urges all readers to take time during May to observe Older Americans Month and to recognize older adults and the valuable contributions they make, whether it's providing care to a loved one or neighbor, volunteering at a homeless shelter, providing child care, continuing to be an active member in the workforce – the list could go on-and-on.

Let's Engage at Every Age!



ENGAGE AT EVERY AGE: MAY 2018





## Senate Aging Committee's Fraud Hotline

The United States Senate Special Committee on Aging is focused on ensuring that taxpayers' money is properly spent on vital programs impacting older adults. The Committee's investigators have experience in fraud investigations concerning retirement savings, identity theft, phone scams, Medicare, Social Security and a variety of other consumer issues important to older adults.

Because older adults are often unaware of where to turn for assistance when they suspect they have been victims of fraud, the Committee has in place a Fraud Hotline for reporting instances of waste, fraud and abuse within government programs. In the past

year, the top complaint received by the Fraud Hotline, more than twice as many calls as any other scam, involves older adults receiving calls from fraudsters posing as agents of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These criminals falsely accuse seniors of owing back taxes and penalties in order to scam them.

The second most common scam reported to the Hotline are robocalls or unwanted telephone calls. Other scams such as sweepstakes, grandparent, computer and romance scams are highly reported. Elder abuse, identity theft and government grant scams rounded out the top 10 scams to the Fraud Hotline last year.

### **FRAUD** Hotline

If you or a loved one  
have been the victim of  
fraud, please contact  
1-855-303-9470

If you or someone who has been a victim of fraud, or if you suspect fraud, contact 1-855-303-9470 or go to: [www.aging.senate.gov/fraud-hotline](http://www.aging.senate.gov/fraud-hotline).

The Fraud Hotline is staffed by a team of committee investigators weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm CST.

## Volunteer Quarterly Training



*Donna Kurth and Sally Webster have each been volunteering with MNRAAA for over 20 years.*



*MNRAAA Volunteers attending the first quarter in-person training in Redwood Falls on April 23.*



*Sarah Reiman, Volunteer Coordinator*



## Memory Resources in Benson

*Betty Christensen, Program Developer*

Benson is a town of 3,100 people in Swift County, located on the northern edge of MNRAAA's service area. Due to the foresight and commitment of community members, new services are being offered there as of this spring.

Dawn Dailey, Librarian at the Pioneerland Public Library in Benson, attended a training where she learned about Memory Kits for people with dementia and their caregivers. Dawn presented the idea of creating Memory Kits to the Benson Area Memory Loss Network. By the next month's meeting, bags and contents for nineteen kits were being gathered! Each kit helps the person with dementia and their caregiver explore memories of events and activities. Examples of the kits' themes are farming, music, sewing, needlework, trains, and gardening. The kits can be borrowed from the Benson Library, just like books. The library also added a section of books about dementia and caregiving to provide additional support to those who need it.

In addition to the newly created Memory Kits, the Benson Library is now hosting monthly Memory Cafés. The Café is supported by members of the Benson Area Memory Loss Network, with one or two members providing food and beverages every month. Members of the Network also stay at each Café to facilitate conversations and offer host services, as needed.

The Benson Area Memory Loss Network is a group of people representing community services

who are working hard to enhance the lives of those with memory loss in Benson and the surrounding area. Educational community events are now being planned for the fall.

A Grand Opening of the Memory Loss Resource Center will be held at the Benson Library on May 16<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. Feel free to join the Grand Opening or contact Betty



Christensen, Program Developer, at [bchristensen@mnraaa.org](mailto:bchristensen@mnraaa.org) or 507-508-5496 for more information.

## New Staff



### Ashley Hagen

#### **Return To Community Specialist**

Ashley joined MNRAAA in March as a Return to Community Case Aide. She lives in Mankato, with her boyfriend, Nick, of 8 years. She enjoys live music, trying out new food places, traveling, and hanging out with friends.

Prior to MNRAAA, Ashley worked at Prairie River Home Care as Authorization Specialist and Recruiting Coordinator, and at assisted living and nursing homes in the Mankato area.



### Paulina Camacho

#### **Information & Assistance Specialist**

Paulina joined MNRAAA as an Information & Assistance Specialist in March.

She has lived in Mankato for 10 years with her husband and 2 boys (who keep her eternally busy). They enjoy being outside and play whenever they can, whether it is nice out or not so much. They are also big hockey fans.

Before joining MNRAAA, Paulina worked at a nursing home for many years.





## Sharing a Meal to Reduce Isolation

*Elaine Spain, Program Developer*

The City of St. Peter's immigrant and refugee population is growing. In the elementary schools, 20% of the students are children of color. Services for children and families are common but services for elder immigrants and refugees are lacking. Of particular concern are East African elders, primarily from Somalia, living with and supported by their families in the St. Peter area. As these families settle in and become accustomed to the community, their elders become socially isolated, disengaged from the community and experience loneliness and depression.

Abdi Noor Matan, Executive Director of the Horn of Africa Aid and Rehabilitation Action Network (HAARAN) reached out to MNRAAA program development staff in the fall of 2016 to see how we could help. The goal of HAARAN is to advocate for and improve the life standards of

persons with disabilities, elders and vulnerable children through promoting and assisting with accessing education, healthcare and rehabilitation. Mr. Matan has established a HAARAN office in St. Peter which provides a unique opportunity to reach and engage the elders.

After several meetings and much discussion about how to reduce isolation among the elders, it was determined that sharing a meal is the best way to bring people together, no matter what their culture of origin. With this in mind, MNRAAA approached the City of St. Peter with the concept of developing a congregate meal program that is culturally appropriate for East African elders and incorporates a time for socialization and educational activities.

A workgroup has been established to move the concept forward.

Workgroup members represent:

- › City of St. Peter
- › St. Peter Senior Center
- › Community elders
- › Nicollet County Public Health & Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)
- › River's Edge Hospital & Clinic
- › Minnesota Valley Action Council
- › Gustavus Adolphus College
- › St. Peter Food Co-op
- › Lutheran Social Service of MN
- › HAARAN
- › MNRAAA

The ground work has been laid and workgroup members are hopeful that beginning in August elders will be able to come together once or twice a month to share a meal, engage in lively conversation and participate in stimulating activities that foster inclusiveness for all cultures.

Stay tuned for updates as the concept becomes a reality!

## Program Development Leader Training Calendar

Below are the dates for leader training provided by MNRAAA for 2018. More detailed descriptions and registrations are available on our website at: [mnraaa.org/training-opportunities](http://mnraaa.org/training-opportunities).

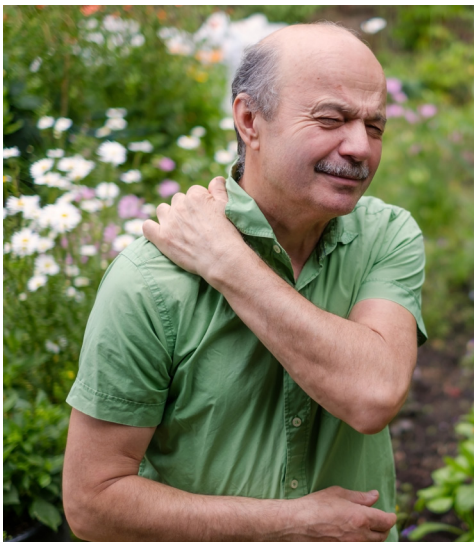
Date	Program Training	Location
May 22-23	Living Well with Chronic Pain	Redwood Falls
July 11-12	A Matter of Balance	Redwood Falls
September 11, 12, 18 & 19	Living Well with Chronic Conditions	Redwood Falls
September 25	Living Well with Diabetes	Redwood Falls
October 2-3	Living Well with Chronic Pain	Redwood Falls
October 30	Caregiver Coach	Redwood Falls
October 31	Holding a Family Meeting	Redwood Falls



## Living Well with Chronic Pain

*Lynn Buckley, Health Care Partnership Developer*

According to the National Institutes of Health, pain affects more Americans than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined. It is a leading cause of disability and a major contributor to health care costs. The diversity of pain conditions requires a diversity of research and treatment approaches.



One such approach is the evidence-based program, Living Well with Chronic Pain (LWCP). This program is a community-based intervention delivered once a week for six weeks and is intended for people who have a primary or secondary diagnosis of chronic pain. Research demonstrates that LWCP participants have less pain, improved mental health, more energy, and increased satisfaction with their lives compared to those who have not taken the program.

LWCP will not conflict with existing programs or treatment and is designed to enhance regular treatment. The program gives participants the skills to coordinate all the things needed to manage



their health, as well as to help them keep active in their lives.

Subjects covered in LWCP workshops include:

1. Techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, isolation, and poor sleep;
2. Appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance;
3. Appropriate use of medications;
4. Communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals;
5. Nutrition;
6. Pacing activity and rest; and
7. How to evaluate new treatments.

It is the process in which the program is taught that makes it effective. Workshops are highly participative, where mutual support and success build the participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health and maintain active and fulfilling lives.

Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are peers with chronic pain themselves. MNRAAA will host a LWCP Leader Training on May 22, 2018 in Redwood Falls. Individuals interested in becoming a LWCP Leader can register online at [mnraaa.org/living-well-with-chronic-pain](http://mnraaa.org/living-well-with-chronic-pain). Space is limited.

The LWCP was developed by Sandra LeFort, PhD, MN, RN in 1996 at McGill University in Montreal in conjunction with Dr. Kate Lorig and the staff of the Stanford Patient Education Research Center. It was derived from Stanford's Arthritis Self-Management Program and the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program.

Like the other Stanford self-management programs, LWCP has been rigorously evaluated in two randomized clinical trials. The program has also been delivered and evaluated across 10 pain clinics in Ontario, Canada. Evaluation of the program found it to be beneficial for participants in terms of coping skills, education, and overall quality of life. To date, the program has been delivered to hundreds of individuals with chronic pain. The first LWCP workshops in MNRAAA's service area were co-hosted by MNRAAA and Catholic Charities in Jackson and New Ulm. If you're suffering from chronic pain, it's easy to find LWCP workshops in Minnesota through one website, [YourJuniper.org](http://YourJuniper.org).

"People who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their own health and healthcare have better outcomes and are less likely to develop new chronic conditions," according to Sara Lindquist, MD, medical advisor to Juniper. "Juniper provides information that helps people to participate in their own care and to work more effectively with their healthcare provider."



## Have you taken a look at Juniper?

Juniper classes build skills and confidence so individuals can make positive changes that improve health and well being. Juniper's evidence-based health promotion programs are available to people across Minnesota. Find a class, register and get started—through one easy-to-use website: [YourJuniper.org](http://YourJuniper.org).

### Helping you achieve your life goals

Juniper's interactive classes keep you on track for a full and healthy life. Classes are for people of all ages. Consider signing up if you:

- › Want to maintain your independence by reducing your risk of falls
- › Would like to incorporate more exercise and physical activity into your daily routine
- › Have diabetes or pre-diabetes
- › Have been diagnosed with a chronic condition and want to manage the condition to live more fully



For information about participating in a Juniper class, becoming a part of the Juniper network, leading evidence-based classes or referring a patient visit [yourjuniper.org](http://yourjuniper.org).

## Stay Connected with Juniper by Email

Sign up to receive updates from Juniper via email by going to [yourjuniper.org](http://yourjuniper.org).

Fill out your email address, first and last name on the Juniper website (at the bottom of the home page) to start receiving updates from Juniper.

Stay Connected! Email Sign-Up

\* indicates required

Email Address \*

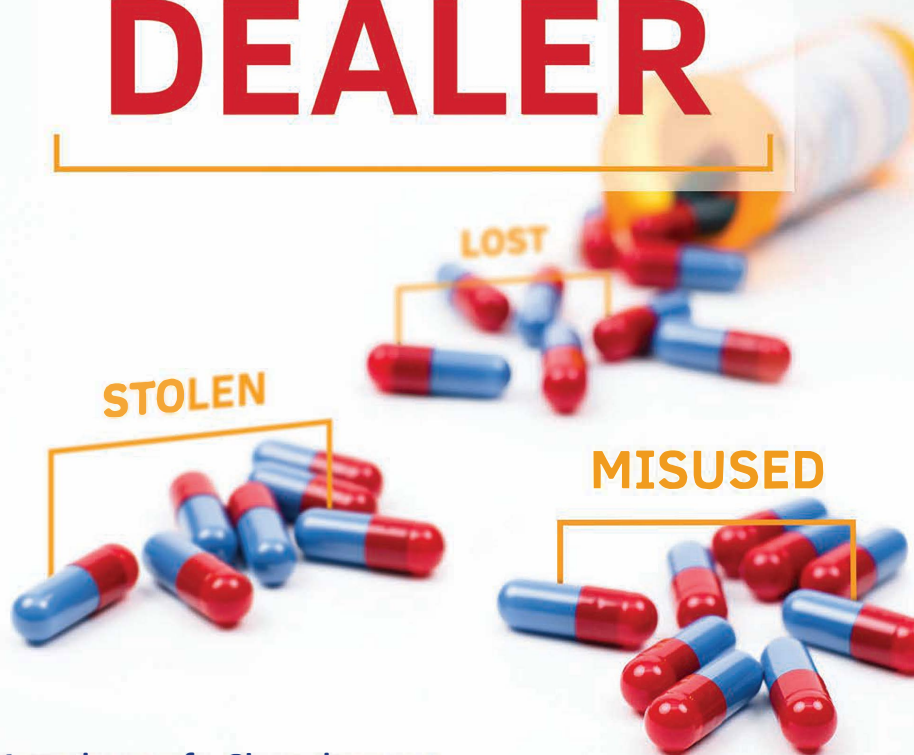
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First Name

Last Name

SUBSCRIBE

# DON'T BE THE DEALER



Keep them safe. Clean them out.  
Take them back.

**Saturday, April 28**  
**10 a.m.–2 p.m.**



Visit [DEATakeBack.com](http://DEATakeBack.com) for a collection site near you.





## Farewell and Thank You

*Sarah Reiman, Volunteer Coordinator*

In March, Judy Ehmke, Anne Litchsinn and Donna Rohrer retired from volunteering with MNRAAA and the Senior LinkAge Line®. All three were tremendous volunteers and though we are sad to see them go, we extend them warm wishes as they begin yet another new chapter in their lives.

Judy and Anne have been with MNRAAA through many changes and significant growth over the past 15 – 17 years, respectively. When Anne began volunteering, the Southwest Regional Development Commission was the local Area Agency on Aging. And for Judy it was the Region Nine Development Commission. They were here for MNRAAA's restructuring, the growth of the Senior LinkAge Line® program, and the almost doubling of our staff.

Judy was attracted to volunteering with MNRAAA because she strongly believes in the agency's work and mission:

*The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging provides advocacy, information, resources and assistance so that older adults can maintain the lifestyle of their choice.*

She has provided numerous hours of administrative support - most notably, she became an expert at copying the 3+ inch thick Core Body of Knowledge training binder whenever new staff and volunteers were trained. Judy loves working with people and is a natural caregiver. She has also used these skills volunteering with VINE in Mankato.

Anne used her enjoyment for

working with computers to teach older adults basic computer skills and internet safety at Senior Surf Day classes. She assisted with Medicare plan research. She has also used her skills with computers volunteering with the Lake Benton Opera House, the Lake Benton Historical Society, and as the financial secretary for her church. There are several other organizations Anne volunteers with and because of her commitment to her community, she won the 2017 Lincoln County Outstanding Senior of the Year award.

Donna Rohrer has also been busy volunteering with many organizations in her community, including with MNRAAA for over 5 years. She assisted with Medicare Open Enrollment events, Senior Surf Day classes, senior dining site assessments, and giving fraud presentations. Around town, she has been busy volunteering with her church, the Slayton Public Library, the elementary school, hospice and the Bloodmobile. Recently, Donna's husband, Clint, sold their seasonal garden shop/greenhouse business in Worthington, so they are looking forward to being "on the go" even more.

These committed and caring women will be missed! If you or someone you know is looking for a rewarding volunteer opportunity, consider volunteering with MNRAAA. As these volunteers have shown, there are different reasons and opportunities for volunteering with MNRAAA and much to be gained. Please contact Sarah Reiman, Volunteer Coordinator, at 1-800-



*Judy Ehmke*



*Anne Litchsinn*



*Donna Rohrer*

333-2433 ext. 82026 or sreiman@mnraaa.org for more information.





## n4a Launches engAGED

*The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults*

Research suggests that remaining socially engaged improves the quality of life for older adults and is associated with better health. According to n4a, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, older adults who are socially engaged in their communities are able to have a powerful impact by sharing their knowledge, talent, skills, experience and wisdom.

n4a has launched a new resource to provide the Aging Network with the most up-to-date tools and strategies for engaging older adults in a variety of ways. Called engAGED – The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults, the resource center will collect and disseminate information about engagement practices, resources and tools the Aging Network can use in their communities.

engAGED is funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, which is part of the U.S. Administration for

# engAGED

## The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults

Community Living. Partners with n4a are Generations United, the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) and the National Resource Center for OSHER Lifelong Learning Institutes.

“A growing body of research suggests that when older adults remain active their quality of life, including health outcomes, improves,” said Sandy Markwood, n4a CEO. “Many of n4a’s members see this every day in their work and recognize the benefits for older adults who stay engaged in their community.”

The Resource Center is building an online library with information

to help the Aging Network develop programs and increase the engagement of older adults in their communities.

Through the Center, the partners will identify and disseminate information about emerging trends, resources and replication strategies that the Aging Network can use and tailor in their communities, and develop a national strategy for educating and informing the Aging Network about innovative approaches and programming.

Visit the engAGED website for more information and updates: [www.n4a.org/engaged](http://www.n4a.org/engaged).

### Little Known Facts About Medicare

*Article from Indeed  
Volunteer Newsletter from  
MNRAAA*

Senior Boom: 10,000 - 11,000 new seniors are becoming Medicare eligible daily. A record of 10,000 people are enrolling in Medicare every day, and it's expected to continue for the next 15 years (until 2030), as the Baby Boomers age. It also means that the total number of Medicare beneficiaries is expected to double within the next twenty years.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that 80 million Americans will be Medicare-eligible by 2035, if current trends hold.

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**m MINNESOTA**



## A Helping Hand to Get You Back Home

*By Steven Jameson, The Free Press Media*

Sherry Folsom-Meeks, a retired MSU professor who lives in North Mankato has kidney failure and needs regular dialysis. Last summer she ended up in the hospital after a stroke. When she came out of the hospital, she was afraid to go home at first. Unsure whether or not she could care for herself, she went into assisted living. It was there that she met Rita Pyan, Community Living Specialist at the Senior LinkAge Line®. With Rita's help, and the help of the assisted living facility, it took only two months before she felt comfortable and able to go home.

The Senior LinkAge Line® is a free service provided by the State of Minnesota to help older adults and their families find community services and options. The office in southern Minnesota serves 27 counties, employing five Community Living Specialists like Rita. Even though the Senior LinkAge Line® has been around for 20 years, many people don't know about it.

"A lot of times when we first call a senior or visit a senior in a nursing home they'll think we're a scam" said Pyan. "People can't believe that we offer this help for free."

Each week, Pyan gets a list of people that have been sent to area nursing homes that could benefit from her help and guidance. That's how she learned about Sherry. Sherry was at Pathstone going through rehab. While Pathstone was nice, Sherry's ultimate goal was to be able to return home. She is just the sort of person the Return to Community program strives to help.



*Rita Pyan, Senior LinkAge Line® Community Living Specialist (left) and Sherry Folsom-Meeks (right)*

Pyan says they do that by taking the time to listen to you, figure out what help you need and then look for the best options. They help with just about anything – from Medicare questions to health care fraud and abuse scams – the folks at Senior LinkAge Line® can point you in the right direction or even intervene on your behalf.

Folsom-Meeks moved to North Mankato in June of 1992 and worked at MSU as a professor until 2015. "I always wanted to teach at MSU...so when the opportunity came up, I took it. I was at the University of Missouri at the time."

Sherry doesn't really have any family close by. She has a couple of siblings that live out of state. So, she was thankful for the Senior LinkAge Line®.

"Rita provided me with a lot of information and handouts that were really helpful. If I would have had to try to track down all of the information on my own, it would have been devastating. Well, not

devastating, but certainly taxing" said Folsom-Meeks.

For Sherry, the Senior LinkAge Line® has been there to provide information and has been a peace of mind. But for others, the Community Living Specialists will do a lot more.

"We'll help them set up things like meals on wheels, grocery delivery and rides", Pyan said, "We call them regularly to check up on them and make sure things are going OK. To see if they need anything."

"Anybody can find themselves in a vulnerable situation, no matter how independent they are. We can provide clarity and choices during a time of crisis. It's very overwhelming for family caregivers to figure out how to find the help their parent is going to need to be able to move back home. We show them what is out there," added Rhonda Anderson, Return to Community Supervisor at the Senior LinkAge Line®.





## New Assistance Sites for People Who Speak Spanish and Somali

Laura Thomas, Information & Assistance Specialist

Many of you know that the Senior LinkAge Line® has trained staff and volunteers who can help answer your questions and simplify your life. They can provide assistance with Medicare, supplemental insurance, long-term care insurance, Medicare Savings Programs, prescription drugs, completing forms and much more. You can call the Senior LinkAge Line at 1-800-333-2433 or visit a monthly MinnesotaHelp Network® site for in-person assistance. Counseling at these sites is free and confidential, and appointments are not necessary, so drop-ins are welcome.

In March, the Senior LinkAge Line® added two additional sites with translators available – one location will serve older adults who speak Spanish and the other will serve those who speak Somali.

People who speak Somali can



receive assistance the third Wednesday of each month from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Community Integration Center located at 201-5<sup>th</sup> Street South West in Willmar.

People who speak Spanish can get help the first Thursday of each month from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at the Willmar Community Center located at 624 Highway 71 in Willmar.

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 and much more.

To find out information about MinnesotaHelp Network® sites in your area, call 1-800-333-2433 Monday through Friday between 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

### Spanish & Somali MinnesotaHelp Network® Sites:

#### Community Integration Center

201 5<sup>th</sup> Street South West,  
Willmar  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month  
11:00 am to 1:00 pm

**Assistance available in Somali**

#### Willmar Community Center

624 Highway 71, Willmar  
1<sup>st</sup> Thursday each month  
5:00 to 7:00 pm

**Assistance available in Spanish**

## AARP Community Challenge Grants

*"Quick-action" grants to make communities livable for people of all ages*

AARP's work on livable communities supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and counties nationwide to become great places for people of all ages. They believe that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; affordable and accessible housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and

opportunities for residents to participate in community life.

AARP invites eligible parties to submit applications for quick-action projects that can help YOUR community become more livable. Applications are now being accepted for small grants to improve housing, transportation, public space and other community



Real Possibilities

elements that support great places for all people of all ages.

Applications are due by 5 pm, May 16, 2018, and all projects must be completed by November 5, 2018.

Learn more at:

[AARP.org/CommunityChallenge](https://www.aarp.org/CommunityChallenge)

Questions? Email:

[Communitychallenge@aarp.org](mailto:Communitychallenge@aarp.org)



Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®

201 N. Broad St., Suite 102  
Mankato, MN 56001



## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you would like to read about specific topics in future MNRAAA *news* or to request MNRAAA *news* by email, contact us at: [kwolle@mnraaa.org](mailto:kwolle@mnraaa.org) or 507.387.1256 x102.

## MNRAAA 2018 Roadshows

Learn ways your local Area Agency on Aging can help older adults, their families and service providers in southwest Minnesota.

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA) will be holding community seminars in Willmar, Mankato and Marshall in June. Attendees will learn more about the services provided by MNRAAA, including:

- » Senior LinkAge Line®
- » Return to Community
- » Program Development
- » Grant Funding

Register online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/NTP5PDD](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NTP5PDD).

Get to know  
MNRAAA

### June 4: Marshall

9:00 - 11:00 am

**Merit Center**  
1001 W. Erie Rd  
Room B  
Marshall, MN 56258

### June 27: Mankato

9:00 - 11:00 am

**Snell Motors**  
1900 Madison Ave.  
Community Room  
Mankato, MN 56001

### June 29: Willmar

9:00 - 11:00 am

**Health & Human Services Building**  
2200 23rd St. NE  
(Signs will be posted inside)  
Willmar, MN 56201