2018
ANNUAL REPORT
Dear Readers:

Welcome to the 2018 Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging® Annual Report. We hope you enjoy reading about some of MNRAAA’s highlights from 2018.

Many of you know that Linda Giersdorf retired in October of 2018. She had been with MNRAAA for thirty-five years and served as the executive director for the last twenty-five. Linda left behind the legacy of having built MNRAAA into a strong and independent agency that is a catalyst in building communities where older adults live with dignity, mutual respect and shared responsibilities across generations and cultures. While we were sad to see her leave, we are excited to know she is opening a new chapter in her life. See page six for details on Linda’s retirement celebration.

2018 was a challenging year for many Minnesotan’s on Medicare. Thousands of Medicare beneficiaries in Minnesota had to find new Medicare coverage after losing their Medicare Cost plan in 2019. We are proud of our staff and the other Senior LinkAge Line® staff across the state who worked tirelessly to ensure people in Minnesota were provided the help they needed during this difficult and stressful time. See page eight for details.

We feel fortunate to have a dedicated and compassionate group of board members who deeply care about the MNRAAA staff and the people we serve. In 2018, MNRAAA welcomed two new board members, Alysia Bolstad from Trimont and Ron Skjong from Tyler. Also, we will miss the expertise shared by Jason Swanson and Dr. Donald Ebel whose terms ended this year.

We ended 2018 with 34 dedicated staff and 40 volunteers who live and work throughout MNRAAA’s twenty-seven county service area. They are looking forward to 2019 when we will be implementing an outreach team concept to focus on caregivers and employers. We are hopeful this new approach of working more closely together, across program areas, will maximize our capacity and increase innovation in our efforts to reach and serve these target groups.

In the coming weeks we are hoping to be able to announce MNRAAA’s new executive director. The MNRAAA staff, board and volunteers are excited to welcome a new director and look forward to working together in 2019.

Sincerely,

Joyce Prahm and Robin Thompson, Interim Executive Directors
# 2018 Financial Summary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and Revenue</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Revenue</td>
<td>$3,345,948</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Revenue</td>
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<td>Foundation Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,984,190</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary and Fringe Benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grantee and Contract Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Management</td>
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<td>Operational</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,832,509</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue over Expenses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$151,681</strong></td>
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*unaudited totals

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**2018 Revenue:** $5,984,190

**2018 Expenses:** $5,832,509

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Chair**: Robert Roesler, Sherburn
- **Vice-Chair**: Rose Schlieman, Holloway
- **Treasurer**: Candace Fenske, Madelia
- **Secretary**: Lisa Lange, Sherburn
- **Members**: Alysia Bolstad, Trimont
  - Dr. Donald Ebel, Mankato
  - Mary Perry, Slayton
  - Ron Skjong, Tyler
  - Jason Swanson, Walnut Grove

### Interim Executive Directors

- Joyce Prahm
- Robin Thompson

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[pinterest.com/mnraaa/](https://pinterest.com/mnraaa/)  
[linkedin.com/company/10376005](https://linkedin.com/company/10376005)
Family Caregivers

Family caregivers continue to be the backbone of the long-term care system. In Minnesota, families provide 90% of the care needed by their older adult relatives. Caregivers frequently do not identify themselves as caregivers, they instead believe that they are simply functioning as a loved one should.

They are often so focused on taking care of others that they do not consider seeking help for themselves, even when they are distressed. They typically believe that they do not have the time to seek other forms of help for themselves because they cannot leave the care recipient unattended.

They may feel embarrassed if they experience a sense of burden or distress because they believe that having such negative emotions means they are not good caregivers. They worry that, if they should need to seek help for themselves, others will criticize them for being unable to adequately care for their loved one.

In 2018, Program Development staff, in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health’s Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), reached out to area businesses and organizations that have wellness programs. Outreach to wellness programs has proven to be an effective strategy in reaching working caregivers. Most recently staff had the opportunity to present at Minnesota State University, Mankato about the challenges working caregivers face. The presentation was well received with over twenty university employees in attendance and resulted in an invitation to provide the same presentation during their all-staff Professional Development Day.

Regardless of where an employee works, the double duty of working caregivers has an impact on the organization they work for. Twenty percent of employees are family caregivers and that number almost doubles if the organization is mostly women. At least 60% of working caregivers report they have made work related adjustments due to caregiving responsibilities.

• 57% report arriving late to work, leaving early, or taking time off
• 17% have taken a leave of absence
• 10% switched from full-time to part-time work
• 9% left the workplace

The biggest challenges employers face is recruiting and retaining high quality employees and productive staff. Caregiving costs employers $17 - $34 billion in lost productivity annually. The average cost per employee for those with intense caregiving responsibilities is $2,441, according to AARP.

Employers can save $1.50 - $5.00 for every $1.00 they spend helping employees with eldercare. Working caregivers who are supported by their employer:
• are more satisfied
• have higher morale
• are more committed to their jobs
• are better workers
• have fewer absences
• are more productive

Business that support working caregivers have:
• better employee retention
• decreased health care costs
• a healthier bottom line

*Data and excerpts are from the Family Caregiver Alliance®: National Center on Caregiving, https://www.caregiver.org-national-center-caregiving
Prairie Five Senior Nutrition Program:
Making a Difference in Rural Minnesota

Prairie Five Community Action has been providing Congregate and Home Delivered Meals for older adults in Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine Counties for almost 40 years. The Prairie Five Senior Nutrition Program promotes healthy and independent living for older adults through improved nutrition and reduction of social isolation. Congregate, home delivered, frozen, and/or shelf stable meals are available for eligible persons and are supported with funding from the Older Americans Act and state under a contract with MNRAAA, United Ways, local communities and participant donations.

Any person age 60 or older, and the spouse of that person regardless of age, is eligible. Participants are encouraged to make a voluntary donation towards the cost of each meal. A donation amount is suggested by the program, but donations of any amount are accepted. Menus for the program are approved by a dietician with the older adult in mind.

It has been noted through surveys that senior nutrition improves an older adults’ health, allows them to stay in their home longer and gives them a sense of security knowing that they will be checked on daily. The average age of participants in the program in 2018 was 81. Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated that the noon meal provided by Prairie Five is their primary meal of the day. One of the respondents commented, “We enjoy the good meals and visiting with friends.”

“Prairie Five Community Action has been at the forefront of providing senior services in rural Minnesota”, said Erick Hedman, Senior Nutrition Director. “Senior nutrition supports the participants in their ability to remain independent and live in their own home. Prairie Five is excited about our innovation in bringing meals directly to the remote and rural areas of our counties. Distance from a meal site should not be a barrier that hinders people from receiving a nutritious meal.”

The exciting innovation Erick references is called “Janelle’s Dream”. In 2018, Prairie Five purchased a hot/cold truck and in 2019 MNRAAA will be providing them additional Title III funding to create a new concept in senior nutrition in the service area. This new concept will be consumer driven offering individualized choice and will utilize the hot/cold truck to ensure meals are available to older adults living in very rural areas previously not accessible by the program. Stay tuned in 2019 to learn more about “Janelle’s Dream”.

For more information about the Prairie Five Senior Nutrition Program visit www.prairiefive.com or call 1.800.292.5437.
Linda Giersdorf Retirement

On September 27, MNRAAA staff, board members and friends gathered at the Mankato Golf Club to celebrate Linda Giersdorf’s retirement as Executive Director.

Throughout her 35 years of service to MNRAAA, Linda served in a variety of positions advancing from an entry level position to executive director; the position she held for the past 25 years. Her work demonstrated her commitment to enriching the lives of all people and her passion for older adults, caregivers and all those who serve and support them. Linda was the chair of the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging (m4a) since 2014. She has been an active member and former treasurer of the Minnesota Social Services Association (MSSA) and a board member of the Chesley Center on Aging.
Staff Volunteer Days

Annually, MNRAAA staff are eligible for 8 hours of paid time to volunteer. 2018’s list of activities is as varied as the people who participated. One hundred forty-five hours were shared to serve others here, near, and far.

A common theme is for staff to volunteer at their children’s schools. Other activities included rake the town, Salvation Army Bell ringers, wrapping Christmas gifts for a women’s shelter, and walking dogs and cleaning kennels at Blue Earth Nicollet County Humane Society (BENCHS).

A list of past volunteer hours will be shared with staff to give them new ideas for 2019.

Juniper — Your Health. Your Community.

In 2016, there were three Evidence-Based Health Programs (EBPs) being offered through Juniper in MNRAAA’s twenty-seven county service area. Juniper is a network of Minnesota’s Area Agencies on Aging, local leaders, community organizations and health systems who deliver programs to help adults manage chronic health conditions, prevent falls, and foster well-being.

By the end of 2018, MNRAAA had developed relationships with thirty-four Service Delivery Organization (SDO) partners who have 121 trained class leaders facilitating the following EBPs:

- A Matter of Balance
- Living Well with Chronic Conditions
- Living Well with Diabetes
- Living Well with Chronic Pain
- Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program
- Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance
- Stepping On
- Staying Active and Independent for Life

Over $40,000 in Juniper grant-funding reimbursed SDOs for programs offered in 2018.

To grow the network and reach more people, Juniper is transitioning from a grant-funded model to a model sustained by partners that share the desire to help people be healthy and strong.

To learn more about Juniper, to find a class or if you are interested in becoming a class leader contact Lynn Buckley, lbuckley@mnraaa.org or visit www.yourjuniper.org.
Medicare Cost Plans, a type of Medicare plan very popular in Minnesota, ended on December 31, 2018 for many Medicare beneficiaries. As a result, this year’s Medicare Open Enrollment Period proved to be the most challenging since the first Medicare Open Enrollment Period in 2005.

Congress passed a law requiring Medicare Cost plans to end in counties that have at least two other coverage choices (known as Medicare Advantage) that met enrollment requirements. Several hundred thousand people living in 66 Minnesota counties were affected and had to choose new Medicare coverage for January 1, 2019.

More than 50,000 Minnesotans were served during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period (October 15-December 7). People who lost plans are continuing to be helped during a Special Enrollment Period, which will end February 28.

It was wonderful to see staff work so well together. All staff, regardless of their department, supported one another. MNRAAA's Wellness Committee provided fun stress relieving activities, like “sock day” and “hat day”. They supplied staff with healthy snacks (and not so healthy snacks) and left little tokens of appreciation on their desks. Because it was “all hands-on deck” during this time, some staff were pulled from their regular work duties and asked to work in other departments.

No matter what staff were asked to do, they did not complain. Everyone was tired at the end and looked forward to spending time with family and friends over the holidays. MNRAAA staff learned a lot about their ability to come together as an organization and as a state, to better serve older adults and their families.

There could be a similar situation during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period in 2019. This will depend on whether people in the remaining 21 counties will be allowed to purchase a Medicare Cost plan for 2020. Regardless of any changes, MNRAAA staff are ready and will do whatever it takes to make sure they meet the needs of those they are dedicated to serve.
Comments from Consumers

So polite and helpful, pleasant and helped relax the stressful situation.

*Some comments were edited for content and to fit space available.*

**Couldn’t appreciate you enough - thank you, thank you, thank you!!!**

Helpful. So confusing this year.
You were a big help.

She delivered the info in a calm way and “at my level” of knowledge. She gave us time to absorb the maze before we had to make decisions.

Absolutely could have never understood our options without experienced assistance.

**Very pleased. Referred a lot of people.**

She explained things and took the time to make sure I understood! I am going to say that it was the best customer service I have ever had!!! She deserves to be recognized!!!!

She didn’t rush me and took the time needed for me to understand the issues.

**I consistently get great people.**

We were amazed at the resource available to us and are going to spread the word of the great service. She was so down to earth and knowledgeable - a great asset.

I didn’t know what to do. I called and explained and in a short time they were able to come up with a solution and it worked perfectly. My prayers were answered.

**Far exceeded anything I had hoped for. Wonderful!**

**Incredibly helpful, understanding, considerate, patient...I could go on and on.**

Very knowledgeable about Medicare options. This is our first time applying and she made it much easier for us to understand.

I needed help with Medicare and my insurance gap options. The volunteer was extremely helpful. He answered all my questions and clearly explained the ins and outs of Medicare and the options that were relevant to me.

When I have hit a brick wall advocating for my parents, it is reassuring to know I have you.

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Numbers represent older adults and caregivers in the Southwest Planning and Service Area. Consumers may be counted more than once if they participated in more than one Title III service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumers served via the Senior LinkAge Line®.</td>
<td>19,209</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older adults received 239,156 congregate meals.</td>
<td>6,230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older adults received 181,365 home-delivered meals.</td>
<td>2,286</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older adults received 1,445 hours of legal assistance.</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers received 3,089 hours of respite care.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers participated in 5,238 sessions of caregiver support services.</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults enrolled in evidence-based health promotion programs.</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults received 1,756 hours of chore and homemaker services.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults received 8,586 one-way transportation &amp; assisted transportation rides</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elders from diverse cultures received 5,144 hours of individual special access services.</td>
<td>97</td>
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