

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.



Monteride



Fairmont



Slayton



Granite Falls



Madison



Willmar



St Clair

Pictures from "Where's MNRAAA?" on the MNRAAA Facebook page.

To highlight the many communities that MNRAAA staff visit in Southwest Minnesota, we are playing a fun game of "Where's MNRAAA?" on Facebook. We'll post a selfie and it is up to our followers to guess where they are. Follow MNRAAA on Facebook at facebook.com/MNRAAA27.



Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA)

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Board Secretary
Lisa Lange, *Sherburn*

Board Treasurer
Candace Fenske, *Madelia*

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Mary Perry, *Slayton*
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New MNRAAA Executive Director

Jason W. Swanson, Executive Director

Dear Readers,

Happy Spring, I think, at least I believe it is Spring now. It has been a crazy, as it is normally, winter. As we head into May, I want to remind everyone that May is Older Americans Month. This year, the theme for Older Americans Month is **Connect, Create, Contribute**.

- › **Connect** with friends, family, and services that support participation.
- › **Create** by engaging in activities that promote learning, health, and personal enrichment.
- › **Contribute** time, talent, and life experience to benefit others.



CONNECT, CREATE, CONTRIBUTE MAY 2019

This is not only a wonderful theme but honestly a way of life. As I begin my tenure with the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, I set goals for myself and the organization. Those goals, or values, wrap together well with this year's theme. They are; to work more closely with non-profits within our twenty-seven (27) county region; be out and more engaged with the communities and to work closely with policymakers at the city, county, state and federal level. That is how I plan to connect, create and contribute, not only in the month of May but while serving as the Executive Director at MNRAAA.

Enjoy May flowers!

Jason W. Swanson

Getting to Know Jason W. Swanson

MNRAAA's Board of Directors is pleased to announce the hiring of Executive Director Jason W. Swanson. Swanson started his role as Executive Director on March 4, 2019.

"Jason has taken the leadership role following the retirement of MNRAAA's previous long-term Executive Director, Linda Giersdorf," stated MNRAAA Board Chair, Robert Roesler.

Swanson was previously with Tealwood Senior Living, serving most recently as a Regional Director of Operations.

Swanson currently lives in his hometown of Walnut Grove with his wife, Devon and their two children Nolan and Neveya. In his free time, he enjoys playing with his children, reading, golfing, listening to music and watching the Chicago Cubs.



Renewal of the Older American's Act

Jason W. Swanson, Executive Director

MNRAAA, like all Area Agencies on Aging and tribal entities, work under the Older Americans Act (OAA) and were established in 1973. The AAA's were established to provide; planning, development, coordination and delivering long term services and supports to their respected service area. The AAA's primarily offer the following core services; Elder Rights, Caregiver Support, Nutrition Services, Health & Wellness and Supportive Services (Information & Referral). Since the commencement of the OAA (1965), it has been amended sixteen (16) times, most recently in 2016. The OAA is up for reauthorization later this year.

Due to the fact that it is up for reauthorization, MNRAAA, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging have been working to educate and inform our representatives on the importance of the OAA and the work which

we all do. To start, I would like to give everyone a snapshot look at previous years and the funding from the OAA. Since 2001, the population of people 60 years and older has grown by 63%.

This growth is expected to continue to increase by 40% in the next ten years. The OAA appropriation, when adjusted for inflation, since 2001 has decreased by 16% and is expected to continue to decrease over the same period. Below is a graph showing the statistics. This information and graph are from aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2019/02/older-americans-act.pdf.

I had the luxury of working with Senator Tina Smith recently on hosting a listening session at Bethesda in Willmar where she heard from constituents about programming and how the utilization of funding under the OAA has assisted in improving

their lives and lives of those we serve. I ask each of you to reach out to your senators and representatives. Share your stories of how programs such as; meals on wheels, congregate dining sites, caregiver support and more have made a positive impact in your life. Contact your representative at the websites below.

Senators:

- » **Amy Klobuchar**
klobuchar.senate.gov
- » **Tina Smith**
smith.senate.gov

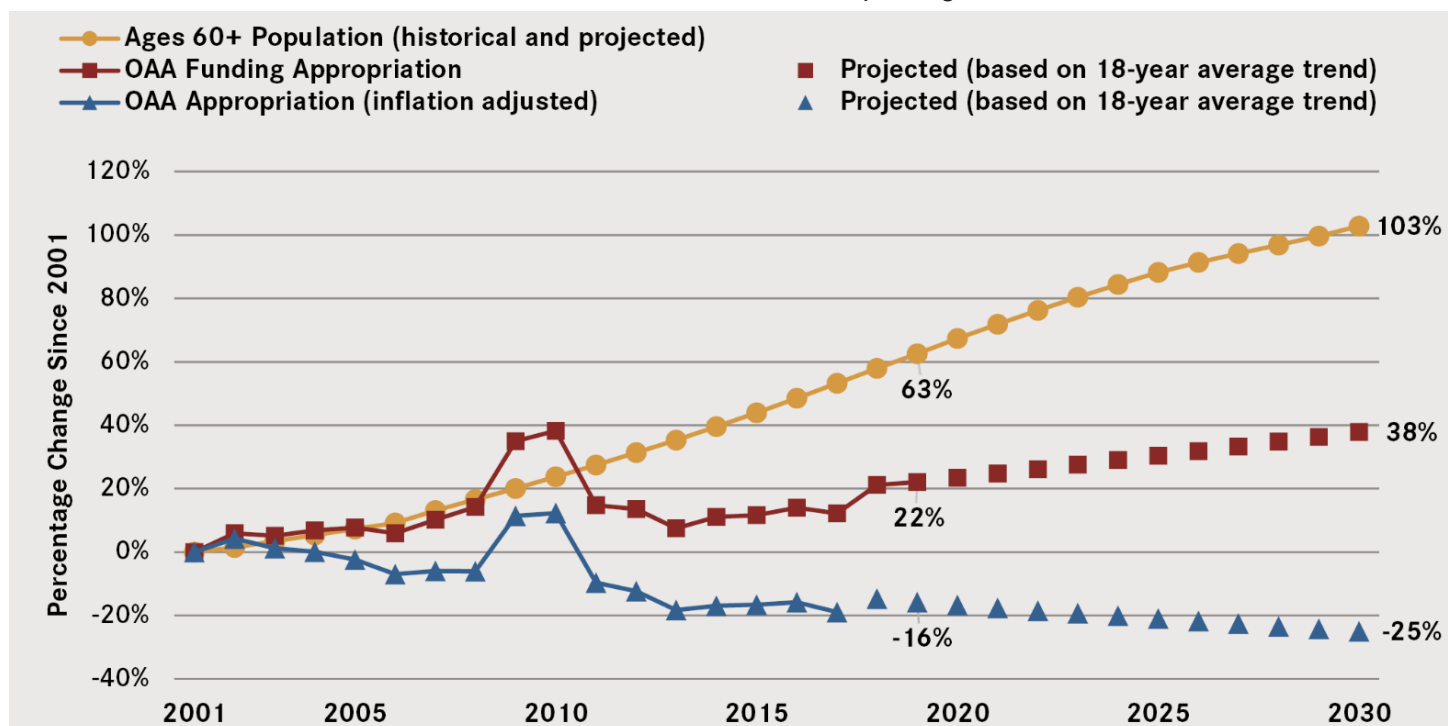
District 1 Representative:

- » **Jim Hagedorn**
hagedorn.house.gov

District 7 Representative:

- » **Collin Peterson**
collinpeterson.house.gov

Please feel free to reach out to me for further guidance.





Many Medicare Beneficiaries Can Save on Prescription Drugs

Some Minnesotans on Medicare may be missing out on thousands of dollars every year. Extra Help is available through Social Security and can help many to pay the premiums, deductibles and co-pays for Medicare prescription drugs.

"Many people on Medicare can't afford to buy their medications so they either go without them or don't take them as prescribed," said Robin Thompson, Information and Assistance Director at Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging.

"Medicare beneficiaries who are having trouble paying for prescription drugs should contact the Senior LinkAge Line® to see if they might qualify for help."

To Qualify for Extra Help in 2019

- » Income of no more than:
 - \$1,581 per month for a single person
 - \$2,134 for a couple
 - There are deductions for earned income
- » Resources of no more than:
 - \$14,390 for a single person
 - \$28,720 for a couple
 - These amounts do not include a home, car or personal property

Medicare can be complicated, but the Senior LinkAge Line can help.

The Senior LinkAge Line is a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging. Call 1-800-333-2433 for help with Medicare and much more.



Holidays

MNRAAA offices will be closed on the following dates:

- **May 27**
Memorial Day
- **July 4**
Independence Day

Connect
WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND SERVICES THAT SUPPORT PARTICIPATION.

CREATE
THROUGH ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE HEALTH AND PERSONAL ENRICHMENT.

Contribute
TIME, TALENT, AND LIFE EXPERIENCE TO BENEFIT OTHERS.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH
CONNECT, CREATE, CONTRIBUTE MAY 2019

Visit acl.gov/oam for more information.



New Staff



Jill Wolf

Program Developer

Jill joined MNRAAA as a Program Developer in November 2018. Before joining MNRAAA, Jill was the Economic Development Director for the City of Luverne and a Housing Specialist for the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership.

Jill lives in Adrian with her husband, Chris and their four children: Quentin, Ana, Caleb and Cyrus.



Kelly McDonough, LSW

Program Developer

Kelly joined MNRAAA as a Program Developer in April 2019. Before joining MNRAAA, Kelly worked at an adolescent residential treatment program, a nursing home and most recently as a Waiver Case Manager for Nicollet County.

Kelly lives in North Mankato with her significant other, Glenn and their three dogs: Paddy, Fonzie and Molly.



Darcey Doeden

Case Aide

Darcey joined MNRAAA in January 2019 as an Information & Assistance Case Aide. Before joining MNRAAA, she was the Director of Social Services at Edgebrook Care Center in Edgerton.

Darcy lives in Lake Wilson with her husband, Tony and their three children: Calleigh, Emaleigh and Oliver. They also have three dogs, named Ellie Mae, Bodhi "Bo" and Bandit.



Samantha Tutt, LSW

Information & Assistance Specialist

Samantha joined MNRAAA in January 2019 as an Information & Assistance Specialist. Before joining MNRAAA, she was the Director of Social Services and then the Activity Director at Good Samaritan Society-Westbrook.

Samantha lives in Lake Wilson with her husband, Taylor and their two children: Grayson and Bristol.



Alison Wierschke

Return to Community Specialist

Alison joined MNRAAA as a Return to Community Specialist in March 2019. Before joining MNRAAA, Alison worked at Ecumen Pathstone Living as a Life Enrichment Assistant.

Alison lives in North Mankato with her husband, Josh and their one-year-old daughter Maggie.



Barb Guggisberg, LSW

Community Living Specialist

Barb joined MNRAAA in January 2019 as a Community Living Specialist with the Return to Community Initiative. Before joining MNRAAA, she was a Director of Social Services for a skilled nursing facility.

Barb lives in Sanborn with her husband, Jason and their two daughters: Lizzie and Lindsey.



Brittany Johnson is Named Volunteer Coordinator

MNRAAA has named Brittany Johnson as the Volunteer Coordinator, beginning in January 2019. Previous to being the Volunteer Coordinator, Brittany was an Information and Assistance Specialist and had the opportunity to work with some of the Mankato volunteers in that role.

Brittany looks forward to learning the rest of the volunteers on a personal level and helping them achieve their individual goals in addition to assisting MNRAAA to serve Southern Minnesota.

Are you interested in volunteering? Contact 1.800.333.2433 ext. 82067 or bjohnson@mnraaa.org



Intern Kelsey

We want to thank Kelsey Hanson for interning at MNRAAA this last semester. Kelsey is a student at Minnesota State University, majoring in Social Work.

Saying Goodbye

Brittany Johnson, Volunteer Coordinator

Two of MNRAAA's long-time volunteers recently passed away.

Gail Byers volunteered with MNRAAA since 2009. She assisted by providing in-person health insurance counseling to Medicare beneficiaries. Gail was well known by the Slayton staff and left behind many dear friends who have nothing but positive memories to reminisce.

Julie Van Name volunteered primarily at the New Ulm Senior

Center to provide in-person health insurance counseling, assisted with forms assistance and provided several appointments during Medicare Open Enrollment. Julie volunteered with MNRAAA for eight years. Julie made a large impact in the New Ulm community and will be greatly missed.

On behalf of MNRAAA, I want to thank Gail and Julie for their dedication to helping their community members.

Become a SUPERHERO

Volunteer with Senior LinkAge Line®
1-800-333-2433
LINK TO A LOCAL AGING EXPERT

Meet Karen, Superhero

She helps people in her community by answering questions about Medicare, finding local services, doing community outreach and fighting Medicare fraud.

You too can become a superhero for older adults and caregivers by becoming a volunteer with the Senior LinkAge Line. Call 1-800-333-2433 to learn more.



MINNESOTA RIVER
Area Agency on Aging®

Presents

DO YOU HELP AN OLDER ADULT?

*If so, you are a caregiver.
Learn to find balance in your life.*

Granite Falls: *Prairie's Edge Casino Resort*

Thursday, June 6

Caregivers: 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Employers: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Worthington: *YMCA*

Tuesday, June 11

Caregivers: 10:00 - Noon

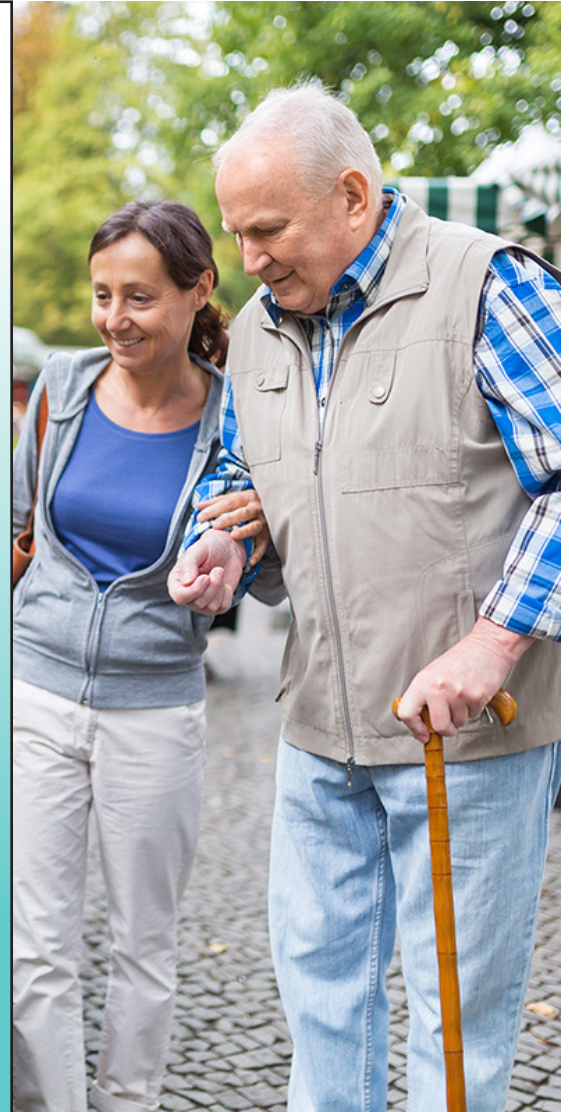
Employers: 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Blue Earth: *Giant Welcome Center*

Wednesday, June 26

Caregivers: 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Employers: 5:00 - 7:00 pm



MNRAAA will be hosting educational training in three cities about caregiving and working with employers on how to assist their employees in their most important role.

MNRAAA hopes to make people aware of resources, tools and best practices to assist caregivers in avoiding burnout and being productive both at home and, if applicable in the workplace. MNRAAA is also taking this opportunity to work with employers on how to identify employees who are also caregivers and to give them tips on how to create a work environment favorable to the caregivers.

Caregiver Session: Do you help an older adult? If so, you are a caregiver. Learn to find balance in your life.

Employer Session: Learn to support and retain workers who care for older adults.

- Talk to local aging service providers
- Learn tips and tools so you can thrive and not just survive
- Learn about free services from the Senior LinkAge Line®
- Hear a panel discussion from local aging experts

Register by contacting cconway@mnraaa.org or 507-387-1256 x109.



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 or 507.387.1256 x102.

We're Hiring!

PROGRAM DEVELOPER

MNRAAA is seeking a full-time Program Developer to assist with the design, implementation and expansion of new or existing initiatives that target older adults and/or caregivers. Focus areas include development of community-based services; redesign or expansion of services and programs; and dissemination and implementation of evidence-based health promotion, caregiver, risk management and related programs.

Candidates must possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree in social services, gerontology, health-related field, education, or related areas. A minimum of 2 years of experience in program development, facilitation, relationship-building, implementing projects and conducting presentations is preferred. Salary range for this position is: \$20.00 – \$25.00.

Candidate must have a reliable vehicle to drive and possess and maintain a valid Minnesota driver's license.

APPLICATIONS

If you meet these qualifications, you can apply online at mnraaa.org/contact-us/employment. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Resumes will not be accepted without a cover letter and completed application.

You can also mail a printed application, cover letter and resume to:

MNRAAA, Attn: Erica Schott
201 N Broad Street, Suite 102, Mankato MN 56001

MNRAAA is an EOE/ADA Employer.



MINNESOTA RIVER
Area Agency on Aging®