

# 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.



*Pictures from MNRAAA Staff Retreat and Training in Madelia.*





## Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA)

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## Census 2020

**Jason W. Swanson, Executive Director**

Over two hundred years ago, the first United States Census took place. At that time, there were roughly four million people; today the population has increased to roughly 329 million people.

The census takes place every decennial, which means the next census will occur in 2020. We're hearing a lot of talk about the importance of the census and why an accurate count is important.



The census, at its highest level, informs us how many people currently live in the nation. Equally important, the census is tied to funding for non-profits and government agencies. This funding supports Medicaid, highways, low-income households, rural communities, older adults and caregivers, to name a few. It also ensures that we have the appropriate representation in our government. That's why it's so important to get an accurate count.

Census Day is observed nationwide on April 1. By this date, every home will have received an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. You should respond to the invitation in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail (most contact is by mail). Here are several tips to help you through the census process as presented by AARP\*:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do verify that a census taker who comes to your home is legitimate. They should have a Census Bureau photo ID badge (with a Department of Commerce watermark and an expiration date) and a copy of the letter the bureau sent you. You can also search for an agent's name in the Census Bureau's online staff directory.</li> <li>Do confirm the questionnaire you've received is on the Census Bureau's official list of household surveys.</li> <li>Do check that a census mailing has the National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, IN return address. If it's from somewhere else, it's not from the Census Bureau.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't give your Social Security number, mother's maiden name, or bank/credit card numbers to someone claiming to be from the Census Bureau. Genuine census representatives will not ask for this information.</li> <li>Don't reply, click links or open attachments in a suspicious census email. Forward the message to <a href="mailto:ois.fraud.reporting@census.gov">ois.fraud.reporting@census.gov</a>.</li> <li>Don't trust caller ID — scammers can use "spoofing" tools to make it appear they're calling from the Census Bureau. Call the National Processing Center at 800-523-3205 or 800-877-8339 (TDD/TTY) to verify the phone survey is legitimate.</li> </ul>

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For more information about the 2020 United States Census or if you have questions, visit [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov). The Census Bureau website also includes a page on fraud and how to spot census scams by mail, phone, email and home visit.

Shape your future and get counted!

United States<sup>®</sup>  
**Census  
2020**

*Jason W. Swanson*

*<https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2019/census.html>*

## Madelia Hosts MNRAAA's Staff Retreat

***Kelly Wolle, Administrative & Communications Assistance***

Downtown Madelia was busier than usual on September 9. Staff, volunteers and board members converged on Madelia for their bi-annual staff retreat.

"We had a great turnout and we were excited to be in Madelia" stated Jason W. Swanson, Executive Director, "we were able to utilize numerous local businesses to assist us during the training." The retreat was held at Lost Sanity Brewery and catering was provided by Sweet Indeed Bakery and Fox's Pizza Den.

"Although we have offices in Mankato and Slayton, some of our

39 staff are based throughout our 27 county planning and service area, so it is nice to get everyone together once in a while." The training that took place featured Age Sensitivity Training which had everyone go through what it may feel like to have vision and dexterity impairments and other conditions associated with the aging process. A specialist presented on keeping yourself safe when working with potentially dangerous individuals. Staff was also training on communicating positively about aging. "Currently, people are living longer and healthier lives, and I personally

think this is great! We have an opportunity to embrace this and work to establish communities throughout the region that are friendly for every generation!" stated Swanson.

MNRAAA provides support through different avenues, which include, administration of funds under the Older Americans Act, developing services in communities where gaps in service may exist, information and assistance through the Senior LinkAge Line and providing advocacy for older adults and caregivers at the local, state and federal level.





## Medicare Open Enrollment is Here

The Medicare Open Enrollment period is October 15 until December 7. Robin Thompson, Information and Assistance Director with the Senior LinkAge Line, wants people to remember, "This is the time of year people on Medicare should review their Medicare plan options for 2020." She added, "Taking time now to do your research can save you money and help you to find coverage based on your situation and your healthcare needs."

The Senior LinkAge Line receives calls every year from people who failed to review their plan changes for the coming year. Since Medicare changes every year, the Senior LinkAge Line recommends that each person review their options for the coming year and open and read every piece of mail received from Medicare, Social Security and their current plan. Annual plan changes can include:

### Medicare Part D:

- › Premium
- › List of medications covered by your plan (formulary)
- › Medication restrictions such as adding prior authorization and quantity limits
- › Cost-sharing: deductible, copays and coinsurance
- › Pharmacy network

### Medicare Advantage and Cost Plans:

- › For plans that include Part D the list above will also apply
- › Coverage area
- › Premium
- › Out-of-pocket maximum costs
- › Cost-sharing: deductible, copays and coinsurance
- › Provider network
- › Covered-benefits and restrictions

Use the new revamped Medicare Plan Finder tool at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) to compare your current plan with other plans available in 2020. This will help you plan for the coming year and give you confidence and peace of mind.

If you need Medicare help, contact the Senior LinkAge Line, a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging. The Senior LinkAge Line is Minnesota's federally designated State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and the place to call for non-biased Medicare counseling. Call 1-800-333-2433 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

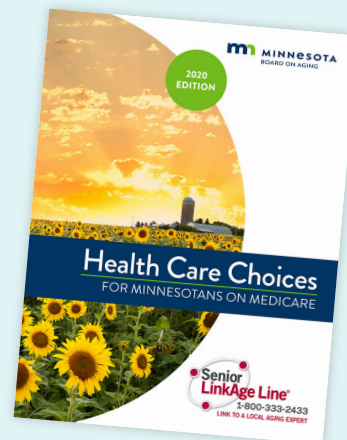


## Health Care Choices

[mnhealthcarechoices.com](http://mnhealthcarechoices.com)

*View, Research, Print*

The Minnesota Board on Aging publishes Health Care Choices for Minnesotans on Medicare online to provide helpful information on a variety of Medicare-related issues.



**give**  
TO THE  
**MAX**  
NOV. 14, 2019

## EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP

On Thursday, November 14, Minnesotans will have 24 hours to show off their "Minnesota Nice" as they donate online to their favorite nonprofits on Give to the Max Day.

This year, your Give to the Max Day donations to MNRAAA will go towards a scholarship fund we've created to train class leaders in evidence-based and other programs that change the lives of older adults and their caregivers.

You can donate to MNRAAA on our website at [MNRAAA.org/donate](http://MNRAAA.org/donate) or at [GiveMN.org/organization/Minnesota-River-Area-Agency-On-Aging](http://GiveMN.org/organization/Minnesota-River-Area-Agency-On-Aging).





## Minnesota Voter Information

**Krista Eichhorst, Program Developer**

November 5, 2019 is Election Day!

Not every community has an election this year but many Minnesota voters do have school district, county commissioner, municipal and special elections on their ballots. Check to see if your community is having an election and what will be on your ballot using the Polling Place Finder tool at [pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us](http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us).

Early voting in communities with elections continues until November 4. Minnesota has “no excuse” absentee voting, which means that you can vote absentee for any reason! Request your ballot by mail or in person at an early voting location in your county. If you live in a nursing home, assisted living facility or are unable to go to your polling place due to an incapacitating health reason or disability you may designate someone to pick up and deliver your absentee ballot for you, which is called “agent delivery.”

Do you have an election in your community but are unsure if you’re already registered to vote? Check your voter registration status at [mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterStatus.aspx](http://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterStatus.aspx). If you need to register to vote you can do so on Election Day at your polling place. Just remember to check the proof of residence requirements beforehand. To vote in Minnesota you must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old on Election Day, lived in Minnesota for 20 days, and completed all parts of a felony sentence.

If you need assistance with voting, there are many ways to get help. You can bring someone to help, ask an election judge, use a machine to help you mark your ballot or even vote from your car.



## CHESLEY CENTER ON AGING

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

### 2019 PALLIATIVE CARE CONFERENCE

**Chesley Center on Aging, Ecumen  
& Mayo Clinic Health System**  
Present

## THE END-OF-LIFE EXPERIENCE: A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

A NEW KIND OF HEROISM FOR PROVIDERS, PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

FEATURING

**Jessica Nutik Zitter, MD, MPH**  
ICU & Palliative Care Physician

**Dr. Greg Kutcher, MD**  
Mayo Clinic Health System

**November 7, 2019**

**8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.**

**Mankato Civic Center (Grand Hall)**  
1 Civic Center Plaza  
Mankato, MN

SPONSORS:



MAYO CLINIC  
HEALTH SYSTEM



ECUMEN®

The Chesley Center on Aging  
Minnesota State University

To register online go to:

**<https://link.mnsu.edu/palliative-care>**  
and follow the link to REGISTER ONLINE.

*Sorry*

— we'll be —  
**CLOSED**

The MNRAAA offices and the Senior LinkAge Line will be closed on the following dates.

**VETERANS' DAY**  
Monday, November 11

**THANKSGIVING**  
Thursday, November 28  
Friday, November 29

**CHRISTMAS**  
Wednesday,  
December 25



## Aging Mastery Program

**Kelly McDonough, Program Developer**

*"Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent."*

-Carl Sandburg

MNRAAA has begun its journey with the Aging Mastery Program® (AMP). AMP is a product of the National Council on Aging and is offered in two unique ways: classroom style and independent self-starter kits. Both options have courses that focus on exercise, sleep, healthy eating and hydration, financial fitness, advanced planning, health relationships, falls prevention and more.

All AMP program materials and resources align with the overarching goal of helping people enjoy meaningful, good lives. With more people participating in the quest for Aging Mastery, MNRAAA hopes to gradually change societal expectations about the capacities,



## Aging Mastery Program®

National Council on Aging

roles and responsibilities of older adults and to create fun and easy-to-follow pathways for staying healthy, aging in place and getting more out of life.

This program is currently being offered in three communities within the MNRAAA service area: Gibbon Fairfax Winthrop Community Education, Graceville Community Center and Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council. Future programs will also be scheduled in additional MNRAAA communities. AMP starter kits are available at both MNRAAA office locations.

If interested in learning more about the Aging Mastery Program or bringing it to your community, contact Kelly McDonough at 507-387-1256 x110.

## New Staff



### Brianna Anick

**Intern**

Brianna Anick is the MNRAAA Social Work Intern this semester working closely with the Program Development and Coordination team. Brianna is from Crosslake, MN and chose Minnesota State University, Mankato because of the opportunities it would give her for her future. Brianna is majoring in Social Work, with a minor in Aging Studies, and a Certification in Long-Term Care Administration.

Her focus while at MNRAAA has been to research respite care options in the 27-county area. This work includes researching service providers online, making phone calls, and interviewing organizations. Brianna didn't always know she wanted to do macro-practice social work until a class got her interested in larger policy and programming work.

After she concludes this internship in December, Brianna plans on moving to the Twin Cities to complete a Long-Term Care Administration internship.

Her dream job is to combine social work and administration as a director of social services for a long-term care facility.

## Community Conversation: Stop Rx Greed

Big Rx companies are making billions and charging us the highest prices in the world. It's time to Stop Rx Greed! No Minnesotan should be forced to choose between paying for life-saving medications or buying food. Join AARP Minnesota for A Prescription Drug Price Solutions Forum focusing on policy solutions to address skyrocketing drug prices.

Join AARP Minnesota with guest speakers: Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison; Dr. Stephen Schondelmeyer; Senator Scott Jensen, Rep. Kelly Morrison, and more on Thursday, December 5, 2019 from 9:00am – Noon.

Register online at <https://bit.ly/36nTYAP> to attend one of nine locations around Minnesota. Register by November 26 to reserve your spot!



- |            |                 |               |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| › St Paul  | › Fergus Falls  | › Rochester   |
| › Brainerd | › Moorhead      | › Waite Park  |
| › Carlson  | › North Mankato | › Worthington |



## Powerful Tools for Caregivers and the Aikido Style of Communication

*Elaine Spain, Program Developer*

Family caregivers continue to be the backbone of long-term care services and support for older adults in Minnesota. Unfortunately, many family caregivers are not aware of the negative impact of caring for an older adult relative or friend may have on their health.

In the Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes we teach a section on communicating effectively with others. In a recent class a caregiver son – we'll call him Richard, was frustrated and sad that he was unable to communicate effectively with his widowed mother because she was so angry with him for having moved her to an assisted living facility. During the class on communication we introduced the Aikido style of communication. Aikido is a communication tool that can help another person to feel that we understand his/her feelings and point of view. A person who feels heard and validated is more likely to work with us to find solutions to problems and concerns. The goals of Aikido are to create or regain a feeling of harmony between ourselves and the other person, to help the other person feel we have heard him/her, and to help the person meet some of his/her needs without sacrificing our own.

What Richard discovered was that instead of listening to his mother express her anger and empathizing with her he was defensive and argumentative. After learning the Aikido style of communication and role playing with other class participants, Richard felt he was ready to try to have a pleasant visit with his mother. This time, instead of being argumentative, Richard responded with empathy, "I'm sorry you are so unhappy here,

mom." Richard reported back to the class the following week that just saying those few words and responding with empathy defused his mother's anger. Richard finally understood that his mother needed him to understand and empathize with her.

As a caregiver, we must rely on our communication skills to obtain and share information, to adapt to change, to ask for what we need, and to stay connected

with others. Problems related to changing care needs are usually laden with emotion. If you reflect the other person's feelings you communicate understanding, acknowledgment and acceptance. Once you address a person's emotions it's easier to discuss the facts and details of a problem.

To find out more about Powerful Tools for Caregiver classes call the Senior LinkAge Line.



## EAST AFRICAN ELDER COMMUNITY MEAL PROGRAM

A New Program and Resource Providing Nutritious Halal Meals  
and Fun, Interactive Activities to Saint Peter Area Residents

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**SAINT PETER COMMUNITY CENTER**  
**Senior Center Room 219**  
**2ND & 4TH THURSDAY OF THE MONTH**  
**11:00 AM-1:00PM**  
**Beginning October 10th**  
**(Not on Federal Holidays)**

Call Hibo to reserve your meal and complete the registration  
form at <http://www.saintpetermn.gov/senior-center>

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**FOR HELP OR QUESTIONS, CONTACT:**  
**HIBO MOHAMED**  
**PROGRAM COORDINATOR**  
**281-948-5674**  
**MHIBOHAARANUSA@GMAIL.COM**

Must be at least 50 years of age to meet eligibility for  
suggested donation price of \$5. Individuals under 50  
will be required full cost payment of \$9.

All are welcome  
**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HAARAN**







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.

## Older Americans Act

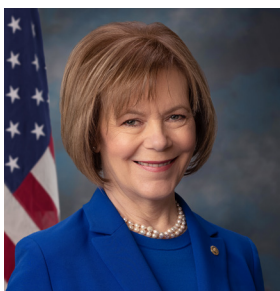
The Older Americans Act (OAA) expired on September 30, 2019, and securing a bipartisan reauthorization is a priority for MNRAAA and other Area Agencies on Aging around the country. The OAA provides millions of older adults and caregivers access to food, transportation and other essential services. It is imperative that we reach out to our congressional leaders to voice our support in passing the reauthorization of this important legislation.

Following is an excerpt from Sen. Tina Smith's response to a letter from Jason W. Swanson on behalf of MNRAAA.

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*The Older Americans Act provides critical federal support to help older adults remain independent in their communities. As a member of the Senate Health Committee, I am working to reauthorize this important piece of legislation to ensure that seniors in Minnesota and across the country can continue to rely on the support services that keep them healthy, independent and connected to their communities.*

*I am also pushing for provisions that would strengthen supportive services for older American Indians and Alaska Natives. Tribal elders in Minnesota and across the country face significant health disparities, and I believe the federal government must do more to support tribal elders who want to age with dignity in their own homes and communities while still maintaining access to quality health care. I've introduced a bipartisan bill with Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska to help tribal organizations provide a wider range of home- and community-based services to American Indian and Alaska Native elders, and I will be working to push this bill forward.*



*The House of Representatives recently voted to reauthorize OAA, and included my provisions on social isolation and tribal elders. I am hopeful that the Senate will quickly take action to pass this bill and support our seniors.*

**Tina Smith**, United States Senator