2019 ANNUAL REPORT
Greetings and Salutations from all of us here at the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (MNRAAA), and welcome to our 2019 Annual Report. I want to take some time to review some highlights of our activities from 2019.

If you follow us on social media (Facebook and Twitter) or through our newsletter, you know that I started with MNRAAA in March 2019 following Linda Giersdorf’s retirement in 2018. The first goal I had was to get to know the staff, providers and volunteers through the twenty-seven-county area which we work. During my travels, meetings and appointments, I was tremendously delighted with the warm wishes and the positive feelings between the organizations. Meeting new people, discussing new ideas, reviewing opportunities from the past and looking towards the future really energized me within the first couple of months. I want to share with you some of those ideas we have been working on, but first, let’s take a quick look back to 2019.

In Saint Peter, the East African Meal Program began in the Fall of 2019. MNRAAA welcomed nine new staff to our organization and three new Board Members. We had a retirement from our longtime employee and dear friend, Elaine Spain and two departures from the Board, Mary Perry and Rose Schlieman. MNRAAA hosted three roadshows throughout the area and began posting videos onto our Facebook page. MNRAAA expanded our outreach program to allow us to cover more of our area. You may have seen us at a health fair, county fair, Farm Fest or at Bandwagon. We look forward to continuing those outreach events and look to include more with employers in 2020.

Many people asked me what my vision is at MNRAAA. Simple, collaboration. We face an unprecedented opportunity, and we are living longer and healthier lives (which is a good thing!). However, our workforce demographics are shrinking at an alarming rate. We need new solutions to these new opportunities and not one agency can work on this; however, working together, we can accomplish a lot. Together we can find innovative, technology-driven solutions. I end with a proverb; many hands make light work.

Sincerely,

Jason W. Swanson, HSE
Executive Director
2019 Financial Summary*

Support and Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Revenue</td>
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<td>Foundation Grants</td>
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<td>Other Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,393,509</strong></td>
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Expenses

<table>
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</thead>
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<td>Salary and Fringe Benefits</td>
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<td>Grantee and Contract Awards</td>
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<td>Contract Management</td>
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<td>Operational</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,360,476</strong></td>
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Revenue over Expenses

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$33,033</strong></td>
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*unaudited totals

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2019 Revenue: $6,393,509

2019 Expenses: $6,360,476

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Provided through Older Americans Act funding from the Minnesota Board on Aging.
Aging Mastery Program Helps Older Adults Thrive

In 2019, MNRAAA successfully introduced the Aging Mastery Program®, an evidence-based program designed to inform, encourage, and support older adults as they take steps to improve their lives and engage with their communities. With the support of three communities in our planning and service area, the Aging Mastery Program was facilitated in Gibbon, Graceville and Worthington.

Class sessions included lectures provided by individuals with expertise on each topic as well as videos, group discussion and development of action steps unique to each participant.

The goal of the 10 core classes is to provide participants with an overview of the challenges encountered while navigating life as we age and offer support to master new skills.

The ten topics are:

• Navigating Longer Lives: The Basics of Aging Mastery
• Exercise and You
• Sleep
• Healthy Eating and Hydration
• Financial Fitness
• Advance Planning
• Healthy Relationships
• Medication Management
• Community Engagement
• Falls Prevention

For more information regarding the ten topics, visit the National Council on Aging website at ncoa.org/healthy-aging/aging-mastery-program.

Participants chose to engage in this program with the outcome being empowerment to improve their well-being and increase their quality of life as they age, in a self-directed and purposeful manner. This was an experience that participants, facilitators and speakers collectively identified as engaging, fun and educational.

Participant satisfaction survey results identified improved health as a positive outcome, and there was a consensus that they would recommend the Aging Mastery Program to others.

We are grateful to have received grant funding to help with the expense of this program and look forward to continuing collaboration with community partners to offer this program. Future programs have been scheduled to occur in Le Sueur, Madelia and Ortonville and additional program sites are in the process of being scheduled.

Those who are interested in participating in the program can find more information on the Aging Mastery Program on the MNRAAA website, including specific dates, times and locations of scheduled programs.

If you are interested in partnering with MNRAAA to bring the Aging Mastery Program to your community, please call 507-387-1256 for additional information.
MNRAAA received an Age-Friendly Communities grant from the Southwest Initiative Foundation to work with four communities during their 2019 – 2020 grant round. A previous Southwest Initiative Foundation grant allowed us to work with two communities, Kerkhoven and Porter, in 2018. Each community is awarded a grant of up to $10,000 to complete a project to aide their community in becoming more age-friendly.

In 2019, the communities of Milan, DeGraff and Adrian agreed to undertake the process of becoming a Community for a Lifetime. The fourth community determined the timing was not right for them, so in early 2020, a meeting will be held with Tyler to determine whether they would like to become the fourth community in this grant round.

The first step in the Communities for a Lifetime process is to develop a Community Leadership Team. The Team determines the definition of their community, i.e., only within city limits or within a one-mile radius of city limits, etc. The Team then assists in distributing the Age-Friendly Community Survey document to their defined community. The survey results help to identify the community’s strengths and gaps.

Once the survey results are collated, the Community Leadership Team reviews the results to identify a gap that can be addressed with the $10,000 grant award. At the time of this writing, the DeGraff survey results have been reviewed by their Community Leadership Team. The Adrian and Milan surveys have been sent; results will be collated and reviewed in January 2020.

As an example, in DeGraff the survey identified a need for more community-wide information about transportation and nutrition services available through Prairie Five Community Action Council (CAC). This need can be met by partnering with Prairie Five CAC without using grant funds. The DeGraff Community Leadership Team met to discuss the gaps that can be closed with the grant funds; they are planning to make a final decision in January.

To some, $10,000 may not seem like very much money to complete a community-wide project, to the smallest communities in our area the process and the grant funding are invaluable. It is truly a gift to be able to assist communities in this way.

To learn how your community could become a Community for a Lifetime, call MNRAAA at 507-387-1256.
Board Chair Report

Looking back on 2019, I have noticed a theme, a theme of change. Change in my personal life, in MNRAAA and across the country.

I recently retired from my position with Minnesota West which has increased my honey-do-list at home. Within MNRAAA we have refurbished our office space in Mankato, saw an addition of two new board members, two board members’ terms expired and a new Executive Director started last Spring.

Across the country we are seeing an increase in awareness of addressing the needs of the aging population. This is evidenced by our own Senator, Tina Smith, introducing legislation to combat isolation and to improve the mental and physical health outcomes of our seniors. We are also seeing more attention given to caregivers at the state and federal level.

As we continue to see demographics shift with less of the workforce to care for our aging population it is refreshing to see more attention given to family caregivers. Change can be difficult at times, however, with these changes comes new opportunities!

I look forward to a prosperous new decade!

Sincerely,

Robert Roesler, Board Chair

Juniper — Your Health. Your Community.

Juniper is a network of community organizations, led by Minnesota’s Area Agencies on Aging, delivering evidence-based programs across the state of Minnesota. Juniper classes help people manage chronic conditions, get fit, and prevent falls.

2019 was a big year for the Juniper network statewide and in MNRAAA’s service area.

In July the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) recognized the Juniper network with a 2019 Aging Innovations Award, the highest honor presented by n4a to member agencies. The award goes to aging programs that develop and implement cutting-edge approaches to support older adults, people with disabilities, and their family caregivers.

In southwestern Minnesota, MNRAAA partnered with 22 organizations to deliver 73 classes in 18 counties through the Juniper network. Classes included A Matter of Balance, Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, Diabetes Prevention Program, Living Well with Chronic Conditions, Living Well with Chronic Pain, Living Well with Diabetes, Stay Active and Independent for Life, Stepping On, Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance. Over 740 people participated in these classes.

In November and December MNRAAA partnered with A.C.E. of Southwest Minnesota, the Minnesota Board on Aging, and Sanford Health to train 12 new leaders in Living Well with Chronic Conditions and Living Well with Diabetes in Worthington. Seven leaders will receive further training to offer the classes in Spanish to better serve the residents of Nobles County.

To learn more about Juniper or becoming a class leader, or to find a class near you contact Krista Eichhorst, keichhorst@mnraaa.org or visit www.yourjuniper.org.
Where’s MNRAAA?

MNRAAA serves 27 counties in the Southwest Minnesota, so our staff have a large geographic area to cover. We have staff located throughout our service area and in 2019, MNRAAA staff visited, hosted presentations or held community meetings in over 75 communities. If you are interested in having us come to your community please reach out to us on social media or call 507-387-1256.
Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act

In 1965, as part of Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society, legislation was signed called the Older Americans Act (OAA), which is the foundation for America’s Aging Network. This piece of legislation came in response to public outcry for a range of in-home, community-based and institutional health care which arose from the first White House Conference on Aging.

The OAA has been amended numerous times throughout the years and was last amended and reauthorized in 2016. The reauthorization for the program ran out on September 30, 2019. However, a handful of continuing resolutions allowed the program to continue. This past year, MNRAAAA Board of Directors, staff and providers sent numerous letters to our congressional delegation and took part in a town hall meeting with Senator Tina Smith in Willmar on April 5, 2019 to discuss with local providers the importance of the OAA.

The House of Representatives passed Reauthorization (H.R. 4334 Dignity in Aging) and the United States Senate introduced the Modernization of the Older Americans Act Amendment (MOAA). The next steps, at the time of this writing, is for the Senate to pass a bill and then to create a conference committee between the House and Senate to combine the two bills. These bills include many items that we have advocated for, including an increase in funding (the funding for OAA is 1/3 of 1% of the total national discretionary spending), language which allows area agencies on aging to look at opportunities through non-OAA funding streams and increased support for Alzheimer’s and Caregiver research.

Funding for OAA-funded programs and services is essential to the health and independence of millions of older adults and caregivers, including the 80,000 plus older adults and caregivers that MNRAAA serves in our twenty-seven county area. The number of Minnesotans turning 65 in this decade (about 285,000) will be higher than the past four decades combined.

Around 2020, Minnesota’s 65+ population is expected to eclipse the population of children aged 5-17 for the first time in history. The total number of older adults (65+) is anticipated to double between 2010 and 2030, according to our projections. By then, more than 1 in 5 Minnesotans will be an older adult, including all the Baby Boomers.

These OAA-funded programs and services are funded through the U.S. Administration on Aging and delivered locally by MNRAAAA and our network of community providers.
Volunteer Drivers

Last year, Tiffany Collins, Central Community Transit and Jason W. Swanson, MNRAAA, testified to the Minnesota House of Representatives Transportation Finance and Policy Division about volunteer drivers. Currently, there is a lack of adequate transportation for our senior citizen population, especially in a rural setting. Many available transportation options are through volunteer drivers who willingly give up much of their free time to assist their friends, neighbors and at times, complete strangers.

Volunteer drivers are a lifeline for seniors in rural Minnesota. They volunteer their time and vehicles to provide transportation to necessary medical appointments throughout the state of Minnesota. Many areas of rural Minnesota do not have access to transportation such as public transit, special transportation providers, UBER or LYFT.

Most volunteer drivers are reimbursed the federal IRS rate of $0.57 per mile. An example of a trip from Franklin to New Ulm, where the volunteer driver would be reimbursed approximately $38.28 for the day, would cost $162.50 using a hired driver.

In recent years, volunteer drivers are being considered “hired drivers” by insurance companies. This decision is having a devastating effect on volunteer’s insurance premiums; therefore, the number of volunteer drivers is decreasing across the state at an alarming rate. Volunteers, on average, drive three to five days per week. A single lost volunteer driver would reduce the availability of 260 rides per year. Our service area has lost over 20 volunteer drivers in the last year alone.

MNRAAA is working with Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Minnesota Social Service Association and others to develop a Volunteer Driver Coalition to bring attention to this issue to the Minnesota Legislature.

You can contact your Minnesota State Senators and Representatives and ask them to support legislative changes that will support volunteer drivers.
Supporting Caregivers: Interfaith Caregivers and Wellspring Faith in Action

In November 2000, Congress reauthorized the Older Americans Act and created Title III-E, the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP). This Title was designed to help family and informal caregivers care for older adults in their homes for as long as possible. By creating the NFCSP, Congress explicitly recognized the important role that family caregivers occupy in our nation’s long-term services and supports system.

In 2003 when the NFCSP regulations were in place, and funds became available, the Region Nine Area Agency on Aging (one of the predecessors to MNRAAA) awarded its first Title III-E grant awards. Among the initial recipients were two Faith-in-Action programs, Interfaith Caregivers and Wellspring, serving Faribault and Watonwan Counties respectively. Seventeen years later, both programs continue to support caregivers through Title III-E grant awards from MNRAAA.

Over the years, these programs have provided respite care, caregiver coaching/consulting, support groups and education and training specifically designed to achieve reduced caregiver burden; increased caregiver skill competency and confidence; extended time care can be provided at home; and increased caregiver access to support services. While maintaining their commitment to these basic goals, Interfaith Caregivers and Wellspring have adapted their caregiver services to address changes in demographics and the introduction of new and innovative models of support.

Interfaith Caregivers has implemented a Friendship Café (a safe and comfortable space where caregivers and their loved ones living with memory loss can socialize, receive support and enjoy the company of those with similar things in common) and is placing a greater emphasis on outreach to working caregivers. Wellspring is responding to the needs of Hispanic caregivers in Watonwan County by implementing a Spanish-language support and education group through a partnership with Our Golden Age meetings.

Both Interfaith Caregivers and Wellspring have been successful in their provision of services to support caregivers. Caregivers who responded to satisfaction surveys indicated the services met or exceeded their expectations, helped them to cope better, increased their skills or ability to provide care, and helped them to provide care longer. Survey comments indicated that the caregiver services are very much appreciated and are very valuable to the community. An on-going challenge for both programs is how to engage caregivers earlier. Kim Askeland, Wellspring program coordinator, summarized this challenge best, “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.” She continued by saying, “There are many resources available to caregivers; they just need to be willing to reach out for and accept help.”

To learn more about caregiver services:

In Faribault County, contact Interfaith Caregivers at info@interfaithcaregivers.net or 507-526-4684.

In Watonwan County, contact wellspringfia@co.watonwan.mn.us or 507-375-1276.

For people in all other counties in Southwestern Minnesota, or if your organization is interested in providing caregiver services or applying for a grant award, contact Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg at rfjeldberg@mnraaa.org or 507-387-1256 x. 105.
The Senior LinkAge Line listened to our needs and concerns and then provided pertinent information and resources. Their assistance was professional, constant and timely, and we found them to be a very valuable resource. It was a very well organized and valuable resource.

I was very satisfied with the help I received. The volunteer took his time and explained the information very well. I will be turning 65 this summer, so I have a lot of decisions to make.

She was clear and gave me the information I needed.

She was instrumental in finding and connecting me with help for my husband upon his return from the nursing home. She was thorough, pleasant, knowledgeable and very understanding.

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

I called for help planning my father’s service needs and the help I got exceeded my expectations.

All agencies should have well-informed people as your does.

Choosing the right health insurance for myself and my husband has been so confusing. It was good to have someone to discuss it with me. She was kind, understanding, caring and concerned. When we get to be 84 years, these issues are so much more difficult to process!!!

They went over and above what I expected for help.

*Some comments were edited for content and to fit space available.
Over 23,330 Older Adults and Caregivers Supported in 2019

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 service.

**13,059** Consumers served via the Senior LinkAge Line®.

**5,571** Older adults received 215,144 congregate meals.

**2,091** Older adults received 174,391 home-delivered meals.

**284** Older adults received 1,377 hours of legal assistance.

**64** Caregivers received 2,187 hours of respite care.

**317** Caregivers participated in 3,926 sessions of caregiver support services.

**1,491** Older adults participated in evidence-based health promotion programs.

**112** Older adults received 1,724 hours of chore and homemaker services.

**270** Older adults received 7,319 one-way transportation & assisted transportation rides.

**71** Elders from diverse cultures received 3,988 hours of individual special access services.