

# LivingWell

Summer 2024 • Volume 20 • Issue 3

A publication of

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*Joni Thomas' resilience has influenced her advocacy for the rights and voices of other individuals living with disabilities.*



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# Director's Corner

I'm very happy to introduce you to my friend and colleague, Joni Thomas, who appears on the cover of this quarter's magazine. I first got to know Joni about 25 years ago when we both participated in the Human Services Federation.


Joni has a mission-focused drive that she has used in her successful career as executive director of Independence Rising and in her role as community liaison with Nebraska Total Care. That compassionate drive, always done with a smile, has caused others to experience improved access to health care and has supported

many in keeping their independence.

"Independence" is defined as an attitude of wanting or being able to do things for yourself and make your own decisions, without help or influence from other people. I see that attitude and desire in almost every older person I meet. Sometimes as we face life's challenges with health, age and loss of personal control, we must rely on others. That can lead to a feeling of loss of our independence.

What speaks to me strongly, though, is that no matter how our lives change, we can still have an independent attitude and want. Joni,

through her life and work, inspires us to continue to see independence as an attitude.

For information on services in our community, contact the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 402-441-7070. 



Randall S. Jones



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This publication's purpose is to educate and inform persons on topics, programs, issues and activities that are of concern to the mature population, their families and community organizations. Specific emphasis is on articles pertaining to the services of Aging Partners. Contents may be reproduced with credit to the magazine.

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# A Life of Persistence: *Thomas Determined to Make Impact*

Five years before Joni Thomas was born in 1957, the United States was facing its most devastating poliomyelitis (polio) outbreak. People were fearful of catching the virus and shunned public gatherings.

A polio vaccine fortunately was developed by Jonas Salk two years prior to when Thomas was born to her parents, Eldon and JoAnne. However, due to being ill during the vaccine's distribution, Thomas missed the chance to receive it, and a Lincoln resurgence of the disease struck her in October 1959.

"I went from a precocious, outgoing 2-year-old to being unable to hold my head up," she said.

Upon arrival at Lincoln General Hospital, Thomas' paralysis had advanced to her chin, and she struggled to breathe. Doctors gave a grim prognosis, not expecting her to survive beyond a few hours. Despite the odds, Lincoln's final polio patient clung to life. Hospital personnel retrieved the iron lung — a large, horizontal cylinder designed to stimulate breathing in patients who have lost control of their respiratory muscles. Thomas ultimately would be one of the last to use this in Lincoln.

She spent six months in the hospital, followed by three months at St. Joseph's Rehabilitation Center in Omaha to wean off the iron lung.

"I had a fabulous doctor who knew they needed to take me off the iron lung, or I would never breathe on my own," she said.

Polio had made its mark though on Thomas, leaving her paralyzed from the neck down aside from maintaining limited mobility in her left arm. Despite the physical limitations, she retains sensation throughout her body.

Navigating life today in a power wheelchair by using a combination of a stick and her mouth to move and grasp objects, Thomas demonstrates unwavering determination despite challenges.

## Advocating for Herself

While doctors had predicted Thomas wouldn't live past age 5, she defied the odds again and reached kindergarten age. In an era when children with disabilities often remained at home, visited only by a teacher, Thomas' mother, JoAnne,

was determined to change that. JoAnne dedicated herself to caring for Thomas, becoming her unwavering source of support and strength.

"My mom's philosophy with me was that there was no point in crying about my situation — this is it, this is the hand you've been dealt, so now you deal with it the best you can," Thomas said.

For most of Thomas' growing years, she didn't have the benefit of legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975 and the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. Things are different now, she said.

"It was a difficult world growing up," Thomas said, when describing what it was like for people with disabilities at that time. "We literally had to fight to be included. It wasn't something that was automatic. The message was clear: You are different, and we're not sure you belong here."

But Thomas grew up in a home unlike that. Her mom was encouraging and always reminding her that she was like everyone else and belonged in spaces just like them.

Thomas attended Park Elementary School, which segregated



*The only photo of Joni Thomas, age 2, before being paralyzed by polio. Courtesy photo.*



*Joni Thomas in the iron lung with a nurse. Courtesy photo.*



*Joni Thomas as she spends time breathing on her own outside the iron lung. Courtesy photo.*

students at the time into two categories: those who experienced disabilities and those who didn't, much like general society. Interaction between the groups was minimal; and when it did occur, it often felt like Thomas and her peers were being showcased rather than included.

Upon eighth grade graduation, Thomas was expected to use a homebound teacher.

"My mom considered it important that I live the same life as the rest of my family," she said. "So, she said 'no,' emphasizing that my two older siblings went to school, so I would, too."

Pressuring the school board, Thomas gained admission to Pound Middle School, located outside her district where the facilities were more accessible and classes were on the ground floor. From there, she continued her education at Southeast High School for grades 10 through 12, following in the footsteps of her older siblings. However, due to the school's lack of accessibility, Thomas could only attend half days. Instead of relocating classes to accommodate, she received homebound instruction for English and algebra.

"My goal in life was to be like everyone else," said Thomas, who graduated from high school in 1975. "That's how I try to live even now."

Thomas pursued higher education at the University of Missouri, supported by a scholarship from Rehabilitation Services, which provided more accessibility than local schools. New to using a power wheelchair, Thomas was away from her close support network. After completing one semester, she relocated to Clear Lake, Iowa, where her mother resided at the time. When she would fly to visit her father in Arizona, she had to seek permission from the airline captain.

"Wheelchair users weren't a welcome entity," she said.

Thomas graduated with an associate degree in liberal arts from North Iowa Area Community College. She was connected with the theater department and had a wonderful school counselor who encouraged her.

"He would load me and my chair up and take me to school events, because there wasn't always transportation," she said. "He encouraged me to do so many things."

Thomas resided in Iowa while selling maintenance agreements for Sears appliances over the phone until returning to Lincoln in 1982. She then pursued a bachelor's degree in theater arts with a minor in film and English at UNL, which she completed in 1986. However, the university required her to fulfill a geometry requirement for the degree. Since geometry was on the second floor of her high school and was inaccessible to her, the high school waived the requirement instead of

moving the class. After many unfruitful discussions about the situation, she took geometry at college and graduated in 1989.

## Advocating Beyond Herself

Thomas has dedicated a significant portion of her life to championing the rights of individuals with disabilities. Her unique understanding from her own experiences about the struggles fuels her commitment to paving a smoother path for future generations.

It was in college that Thomas encountered the independent living philosophy, pioneered by Ed Roberts, which focused on the individual making the decisions impacting their life rather than those around them. Thomas has carried this philosophy into her work to this day.

Thomas worked as an independent living advisor for the League of Human Dignity from 1991 to 1997, assisting individuals who experienced disabilities to live successfully in the community of their choice — helping to determine and set up services and supports, find accessible housing, apply for financial programs, teach budgeting and more.

She spent three years working at Goodwill's Job Connection program, helping others find employment. In 2001, she was a Medicaid infrastructure grant coordinator

*Continued on page 6.*



# A Life of Persistence: Thomas Determined to Make Impact

Continued from page 5.

for the State of Nebraska, managing grants, coordinating trainings and promoting the Ticket to Work Program. She knew the program incentives well because she was using them.

While the job afforded her the opportunity to travel frequently, she encountered a clear societal message that she wasn't capable.

"When flying or eating at a restaurant, employees often would talk to my aide instead of directly to me, even though I was the one answering all the questions," she said.

Thomas discovered a new level of independence and freedom to move around when she was able to purchase a vehicle, equipped with a joystick and button controls, and receive her driver's license.

"I was a 40-year-old 16-year-old," she joked.

Thomas continued her advocate role when she became unit manager in 2005, overseeing programs such as the Early Development Network, Medically Handicapped Children's Program, Respite, Adult Protective Services, Disabled Persons and Family Support.

In 2009, Thomas became executive director at Grand Island's Independence Rising, a nonprofit helping people with disabilities in 39 counties throughout western Nebraska live independently.

"They support those who experience disabilities to live in the community of their choice, work as they can and want to, as well as have control over where they live, who they live with and what they do in their day, just like anyone else would," she said.

She advocated for independent living when she began working at Nebraska Total Care in 2016.

"I saw my role as a bridge between the disabled community and the health care industry," she said. "We've never had equal standing in health care, and the medical model often views a chronic illness or disability as a deficit and something to be corrected. But we don't see our circumstances as deficits. I don't need to be fixed or changed — that's the social model versus the medical model."

She helped staff understand Waiver and Social Security regulations, was involved in councils and boards in the disability community and continued to advocate for individuals with disabilities to have a say in their care.

## Advocating for the Horizon

Shortly before her retirement in November 2023, Thomas created a nonprofit, Tectonic Change.

"My goal is to modify the home care industry to be based on the independent living philosophy," she said.

Home care is currently based on medical model, and doesn't give the individual receiving care much control.

"With independent living, the consumer is in control," Thomas said. "There would be more input from the beginning on the personality of the person doing home care, and the individual would share things important to them. For me, I want an aide who has common interest and helps me be the person I want to be, support the things I would do if I didn't experience a disability."

Thomas also wants to work with businesses and corporations to promote understanding about the value of hiring people with disabilities. For more information on Tectonic Change, email [tectonicchange@outlook.com](mailto:tectonicchange@outlook.com).

She continues to maintain her independence and advocate for those like her.

"People with disabilities are out here living the best life they can, just like everyone else," Thomas said. "We desire the opportunity to work, play and love in the spaces we want, too." <sup>lw</sup>

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**[problemgambling.nebraska.gov](http://problemgambling.nebraska.gov)**



## Aging Partners' Team Members Recognized

*Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, center, presents the January 2024 Mayor's Award of Excellence to Aging Partners team members from left: Mitch Sump, Beth Schuster, Jeff Krotz and Kay Wenzl.*

On March 18, Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird honored Aging Partners team members Jeff Krotz, Beth Schuster, Mitch Sump and Kay Wenzl with the Mayor's Award of Excellence for January 2024.

This accolade recognizes City of Lincoln employees who consistently deliver outstanding service and exhibit personal commitment to Lincoln. Aging Partners Director Randall Jones nominated the team for exceptional productivity and customer relations during a successful relocation of the Aging Partners' main office, health and fitness center and transportation program from three separate facilities to the new Victory Park location in May 2023.

"These individuals not only assisted our staff with getting to where they needed to go, but they also helped ensure the success of the move at Victory Park, which has been incredible for the public," Jones said.

Each recipient demonstrated leadership in their respective areas

during the relocation, ensuring minimal disruption to agency services.

Krotz, office specialist, managed the agency's communication with contractors, ensuring change orders and invoices were received, approved and processed.

"Jeff was my right-hand person during the entire transition to make sure we were on target with the project," Jones said.

Schuster, program supervisor, oversaw the movement of furniture, disposition of unneeded items and maintained the senior center services during the transition.

Sump, program coordinator, oversaw new facility needs and worked through numerous challenges. He continues to serve in this oversight role for the new facility to handle maintenance and cleaning.

Wenzl, assistant director, managed the transition of information technology, telephone and computer systems — crucial tools of the agency's operations with many complexities.

"While this major project took considerable time, these individuals ensured that their staff members were supported and their routine roles continued even with this added responsibility," Jones said.

While the team members performed numerous tasks outside their normal daily responsibilities, the entire Aging Partners Leadership Team and staff contributed to the successful, comprehensive relocation of an entire City department, Jones noted.

"Not one employee was unaffected by the transition," he said. "As I said in the presentation in the City Council meeting, 'When I form my next dodge ball team, these are the team members who I will choose.'"

The community has responded positively to the move, Jones said. The health and fitness program has seen a 320 percent increase in participants, and the dining room has seen a 215 percent increase compared to the previous year since the move. **lw**

# Medicare Supplements vs. Advantage Plans Basics

By Molli Stolz, Aging Partners benefits counselor

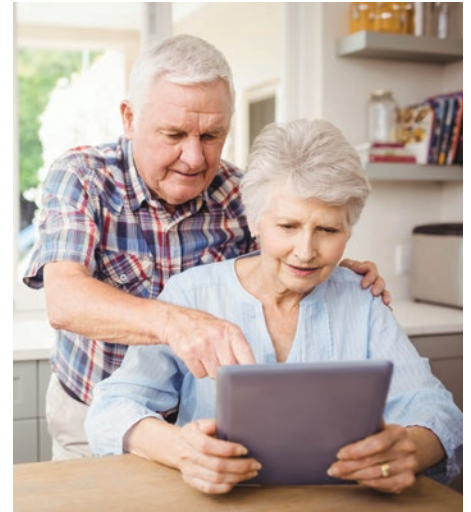
With multiple Medicare plan options, sorting through them can often be confusing and overwhelming.

There are two types of Medicare plans: Advantage plans and supplementals, also known as Medigaps. Before deciding which plan to pick, it's important to factor in health status, medical treatments, medical history, provider access, affordability and travel, to name a few. It's also important to understand the differences between the two and the ability to change plans should the need arise.

## Medicare Supplements

When a person has Medicare and a supplement, this is known as "original Medicare." A Medicare supplement plan is sold by a private insurance company that covers copays and deductibles that Medicare A and B by themselves do not cover. As these are sold by private insurance companies, they have premiums, on top of Medicare A and B premiums. Medicare supplement plans are secondary insurance to Medicare, which means if Medicare is not covering a charge, the supplement also will not cover the charge.

Medicare supplements have



letters attached to them and are often called Supplement Plans A, B, D, G, K, L, M and N. Plans C and F previously were sold, but they are no longer available to individuals who turned age 65 after Jan. 1, 2020.

Each plan has different coverage and prices. Individuals under age 65 are not eligible for a

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Plan G is the most popular plan currently available. Plan Gs have the most comprehensive coverage out of the plans available to anyone over age 65.

In Nebraska, supplements have an average monthly premium of \$135. For a Plan G, regardless of the company issuing it, this is federally regulated to offer specific benefits. This includes coverage of Part A deductibles, Part A and Part B coinsurances and foreign travel emergency coverage. With a Plan G supplement, the only charge not covered is a \$240 annual, Part B deductible.

Medicare supplements do not have networks the way most insurances do. If a physician takes Medicare, the physician will take any supplemental plan, regardless of company. With original Medicare, there are rarely authorizations or preapprovals needed. Original Medicare rarely issues denials of services. There are also appeals processes for denials that are received. When traveling, Medicare supplementals will cover a person in any other state just as they do in Nebraska.

Medicare supplement plan premiums are likely to increase each year. Increases are often unpredictable, as each insurance company is allowed to set its

premiums. Because of rising premiums, Medicare supplements can quickly become unaffordable.

It is possible to switch supplemental plans – either to a different company or to a plan with less coverage – at any time of the year as Medicare supplements are not bound to an enrollment period. However, it can become difficult to switch plans due to age and health status.

Supplements have a guaranteed issue period, a six-month window beginning when an individual first starts Part B, where insurance companies must issue a supplemental policy regardless of health, medications or history of illness. An individual cannot be penalized either with high premiums or rejection due to health. Once the initial six months are up, those looking to switch companies or plans would have their health reviewed and may not be offered a supplemental plan.

A person does have a right during open enrollment to switch from original Medicare to an advantage plan. A one-time 12-month “trial right” is given for someone to test out an advantage plan and then can go back to their original supplement if they so choose.

## Advantage Plans

A Medicare Advantage plan is an alternative to original Medicare. These plans, also sold by private insurance companies, were created due to Medicare beneficiaries wishing to have insurance similar to employer insurance. Medicare Advantage is privatized Medicare.

Throughout the last several years, Advantage plans have gained popularity and now 51 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in one.

Medicare Advantage plans often do not have an additional premium attached, and they essentially roll all the parts of Medicare into one plan. The same insurance company runs Medicare A and B and the drug coverage.

Advantage plans use copays for services and treatments, set on a calendar year basis by the insurance company. Instead of a deductible, these plans have maximum-out-of-pocket (MOOP). These can range from \$4,000-\$8,000 annually. A MOOP is the maximum a person would spend in a calendar year with the plan.

It's important to note that not every copay goes toward the MOOP, and prescription medications are not included in this.

Most treatments and services must be pre-authorized by the insurance company. If the plan does

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# Medicare Supplements vs. Advantage Plans Basics

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not approve coverage, the service will be denied, and participants can choose to private pay for the entire service.

Advantage plans are offered, most typically, in Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO) form. HMOs tend to have lower MOOP but require participants to be “in-network.” This means that every physician needs to be part of the plan’s network (set by the insurance company) and willing to bill the plan. These networks can change on a year-to-year basis. A PPO allows for in- and out-of-network services. There are lower costs for being in-network. There are two different MOOPs for PPOs – one for in-network and one for

out-of-network. It can be difficult, especially in rural areas, to find in-network providers. While traveling state to state, it is important to be aware of which hospitals are in-network with the plan as the plan networks vary among states.


Dental and vision coverage are included for no additional cost in Advantage plans, unlike original Medicare. These benefits are built into the plans and have varying benefit amounts. These plans also often include extra benefits such as paying for emergency response systems, meals post-hospitalization, over the counter items or gym memberships.

Medicare Advantage plans have two open enrollment periods when participants may switch to a new Advantage plan and review any upcoming changes. The first

open enrollment is Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, and the second from Jan. 1 to March 31. There is no penalty for switching, and participants are not put through a health screening.

## Getting Unbiased Information

Before deciding on either Medicare option, it is important to evaluate how the coverage will best serve individual participants. Discussing Medicare options with providers is recommended to gain insight into how the coverage will impact treatments and services needed as a person ages.

There are unbiased resources available for individuals to consult, such as Aging Partners at 402-441-7070 and Nebraska SHIP, 402-471-2841. Additional information can be found at [medicare.gov](http://medicare.gov). 

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# Ensuring Safe Travels: Navigating Driving Challenges for Older Adults

As the number of motorists on the road continues to grow, the cherished freedom of driving can be accompanied by new complexities.

While many older adults maintain safe driving habits well into their golden years, it's imperative to acknowledge changes and make any necessary modifications. Experience is valuable, but decades behind the wheel can also lead to complacency.

"As we get older, we have more to think about, more experiences to remember, more distractions, and we can sometimes forget we are in the command of a vehicle that could injure not only yourself, but people around you," said Norm Huber, AARP Nebraska Driver Safety coordinator.

Because of this, it's important to minimize distractions such as using a cell phone, adjusting the radio, eating or putting on makeup.

"Anything and everything when we drive can be a distraction," Huber said. "Even adjusting or listening intently to the radio takes attention away from driving and valuable

*Norm Huber, AARP Nebraska Driver Safety coordinator, presents to older adults at Aging Partners' Victory Park Senior Center.*

seconds of reaction time."

Making adjustments can feel uncomfortable, but older adults should avoid rush hour or busy traffic times, drive during favorable weather conditions to minimize risk, and avoid nighttime driving if possible.

"It can be difficult to see at night, so stop and wait until morning and continue on," Huber said. "Avoid as many challenging situations as you can."

It's imperative that older adults continue to receive regular eye exams, hearing tests and health exams to sustain their driving fitness. Regular exercise can help with physical strength and flexibility; important for safe driving.

Maintaining a safe following distance will allow ample reaction time, and giving extra time to get where a person needs to go will allow the individual to not rush or make quick decisions.

Nearly a third of all crashes involving older adults are a result of failure to yield to the right of way,



*Norm Huber*

and over 90 percent of those crashes occur when making a left turn.

"It is our number one problem as we mature," Huber said. "A number of things contribute: poor vision, lack of concentration, distractions, nighttime driving, depth perception, speed and more."

FedEx and UPS drivers are encouraged to make three right turns around the block instead of making a left turn, a great alternative for mature drivers.

Taking a different route occasionally to a familiar location can stretch your thinking.

"It's amazing how many rituals we have; and if you change them a little, it stimulates your thinking and causes you to be a little more flexible," he said. "There are a lot of things we have 'always done' that we refuse to change because it's comfortable."

## Driving Reminders

Taking a refresher driving course can also help mature drivers



stay updated with road rules, current driving habits and safe driving practices. Designed for those ages 50 and over, the AARP Driver Safety course has been providing driving tips and strategies for 45 years.

“As we get older, we oftentimes fall into a routine, and experience can work against us,” Huber said. “We can get lulled into the belief that we must be a good driver, because we’ve never

had a citation or crash, but that’s not necessarily true — we just haven’t been at the right place or right time.”

The class covers many topics including: lane markings, intersections, traffic circles, diverging diamonds, right of way, nighttime driving, following distances, glare, various types of weather, aggressive drivers, bikes, motorcycles, scooters, assistive

cruise control, ultrasonic warnings, rear view cameras, headlights, seating and steering wheel position, mirror settings and seatbelt positioning.

“If you learn one thing or are reminded of something you have forgotten or were doing incorrectly, we think it’s worth your time and money,” Huber said.

The course is offered at different venues and schedules, priced at \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members. Completing the course may qualify a person for a discount with select car insurance providers. To find a class near you, visit [www.aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/locations](http://www.aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/locations).

AARP is seeking volunteers passionate about safe driving to become instructors for the course. Training is available. If interested, contact Huber at [normhuber87@gmail.com](mailto:normhuber87@gmail.com) or 402-210-3472.

*Continued on page 14.*



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# Ensuring Safe Travels: Navigating Driving Challenges for Older Adults

Continued from page 13.


## When Is It Time to Stop?

With people living longer, driving at an older age is common, but that comes with safety considerations. It's important to recognize when it's time to stop or limit driving, such as vehicle scratches, increase in violations or minor accidents, difficulty with basic driving tasks, physical limitations and health changes, medications affecting concentration, having difficulty navigating, close calls or near accidents, increased anxiety while driving and family or friends expressing their concerns.

In the U.S., the average age someone stops driving is 75. However, many older adults may be reluctant to give up driving privileges. Consider alternative transportation options such as using family, friends, public transportation, Aging Partners, Uber and Lyft.

Conversations about stopping driving should be approached with empathy and involve trusted

figures such as doctors or therapists if necessary. Prioritizing safety for both the older adult and the public is crucial.

AARP offers a presentation called "We Need to Talk" on this topic at [www.aarp.org/membership/benefits/auto/we-need-to-talk](http://www.aarp.org/membership/benefits/auto/we-need-to-talk). 

## Upcoming AARP Driver Safety Courses

(at the time of printing)

July 23, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

AARP Nebraska State Office

301 S 13th Suite 201, Lincoln NE 68508

Call 402-210-3472 to register.

Aug. 8, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Northeast Senior Center

6310 Platte Ave., Lincoln NE 68507

Call Ciji at 402-441-7151 to register.

Oct. 8, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

AARP Nebraska State Office

301 S 13th Suite 201, Lincoln NE 68508

Call 402-210-3472 to register.

Oct. 16, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Victory Park Senior Center

600 S 70th St, Lincoln, NE 68510

Call Ben at 402-441-7154 to register.



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**Please fill out an application by going to [rocberryfarm.com/jobs](http://rocberryfarm.com/jobs), or just call Beverly at 518-760-2176.**





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June 18, 2024

<https://olli.unl.edu>

Registration is required.

# New Voter ID Law in Place for Election

Voting is a cherished civic right that provides an avenue to voice opinions and contribute to shaping the future of the community and nation. Last year, LB514 established voter identification requirements for all elections in Nebraska.

## Acceptable Forms of Identification

Voters must present identification showing the name AND photograph issued by the U.S. Government, State of Nebraska, Nebraska political subdivision such as county or city, or a Nebraska college or university.

The most common two forms of identification are a driver's license or State ID card, which about 97 percent of the 201,000 Lancaster County voters have, according to Todd Wiltgen, Lancaster County election commissioner.

Other acceptable forms of identification include a passport, passport card, concealed carry permit, federal or state employee ID, tribal ID, military ID or veteran ID.

"For voting purposes, these IDs can be expired or have a different address if you've recently moved," Wiltgen said.

Individuals residing in a hospital, assisted living or nursing home can provide a facility record if it includes the voter's name and photo — medical information should be redacted.

Even a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) receipt for a driver's license or state ID card will work, since it does take a few weeks to receive the actual card in the mail.

For a comprehensive list of acceptable IDs, visit [voterid.nebraska.gov](http://voterid.nebraska.gov).

Unacceptable forms of identification include out-of-state driver's license, college or university ID; Medicare card; Social Security card; birth certificate; store membership card; American Legion card; StarTran Paratransit card; utility bill or bank statement.

Poll workers are trained to look for reasonable variations of names and photo resemblance. If a poll worker can't verify your identity, you may still vote provisionally, in which you will need to present a valid ID at the Lancaster County Election Commission office in person on or before the Tuesday after the election, or your vote will not be counted.

For early voting by mail, signatures and identification is verified during the application process, in which Election Commission employees carefully verify.

## Getting an Acceptable ID

Voters can receive a state ID card at no cost for voting purposes at the Nebraska DMV. NOTE: Individuals with a



Todd Wiltgen, Lancaster County election commissioner, speaks about Voter ID laws at the May Aging Partners Outreach Breakfast.



valid driver's license should NOT apply for a state ID, as it will invalidate your driver's license.

To obtain a state ID, individuals will need to confirm their identity by providing proof of U.S. citizenship containing name, date of birth and identity such as a birth certificate; two documents verifying address; and provide their Social Security number.

"Any Nebraska resident can go to any DMV office

An advertisement for Bailey Pointe Assisted Living at Van Dorn. It features a photograph of an elderly couple smiling. The text includes the company name "Bailey Pointe ASSISTED LIVING AT VAN DORN" and the slogan "Let our family care for yours." Below the slogan is a QR code and the text "Tour today to see the Sagora Senior Living difference". At the bottom, contact information is provided: "(402) 513-3540 | BaileyPointeVanDorn.com" and "7208 Van Dorn St., Lincoln, NE 68506". There is also a small logo for "A Sagora Senior Living Community" and a hashtag "#ALF157".



statewide to obtain a state ID card — it doesn't have to be your local office," Wiltgen said.

Find a location near you at [dmv.nebraska.gov/locations](http://dmv.nebraska.gov/locations). In Lancaster County, appointments are encouraged and can be made at [dmv.nebraska.gov/locations/lancaster-county](http://dmv.nebraska.gov/locations/lancaster-county).

Nebraska law also cites that the state will provide a free birth certificate to individuals born in Nebraska to obtain a state ID to vote. Information can be found at: [dhhs.ne.gov/pages/vital-records.aspx#birthcertificate](http://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/vital-records.aspx#birthcertificate).

Reasonable Impediment Certification (RIC) can be filled out at polling location in lieu of a photo ID in the cases of: inability to obtain documents necessary to get a State ID card, those who have religious objections to being photographed; and individuals unable to obtain a valid photo ID due to disability or illness.

### Have a Question?

For questions, call the Lancaster County Election Commission Office at 402-441-7311 or the Secretary of State at 402-471-2554.

"Don't wait until election day," Wiltgen said. "Contact our office now if you are unsure, and we can work through any challenges and address them before you vote."

To register to vote, visit [sos.nebraska.gov/elections/voter-forms](http://sos.nebraska.gov/elections/voter-forms). **LW**

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Domesti-PUPS volunteers, from left, include, Anne Kastl, Cindy Terwilliger and Merri Hackbarth with dogs Ellie, Link and Olive.

## Transforming Lives, One Dog at a Time

A single dog can have a profound impact on the life of an individual with a disability, offering assistance, companionship and independence to enhance the person's overall quality of life.

Service dogs perform tasks, including retrieving items, opening doors, activating light switches, offering support for balance, pulling wheelchairs and providing vital medical condition alerts, such as detecting seizures in individuals with epilepsy or fluctuations in blood sugar levels for those with diabetes.

Many of these dogs begin their specialty training in Lincoln through Domesti-PUPS (Providing Unique Personal Service). Training is a community effort, with a team of volunteers and inmate handlers collaborating to prepare these dogs, most frequently, to offer assistance for balance disorders, mobility, diabetic alert and seizure response.

While any breed of dog can



become a service animal, Domesti-PUPS uses labs, golden retrievers, poodles and mixes of those breeds.

Puppies raised by volunteers are evaluated on their physical health and temperament. Those who pass standards are relocated and taught potty and crate training, walking on a leash and other basic manners from volunteer inmate handlers at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women (NCCW) in York.

About every six weeks, puppies in training will be taken out and put into volunteer puppy raiser homes for obedience training.

"We want the puppy to continue learning commands, but not forget what it's like to be in a home with a family," said Merri Hackbarth, president of Domesti-PUPS board of directors. "Once they pass the Canine Good Citizen test, they can go into public spaces and continue training."

Once they are about a year old, dogs move to formal service

dog training at NCCW in York, the Nebraska State Penitentiary or Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) Reception and Treatment Center in Lincoln.

Through a rigorous interview process, Domesti-PUPS matches dogs with owners based on lifestyle and needed tasks to customize training. To ensure dogs perform the necessary tasks, inmate handlers are asked to "live" the disability, which might require them to use a wheelchair, walker or drop down and pretend they are having a seizure.

Training occurs day and night, critical for diabetic alert or seizure response dogs, which use scent and sounds to recognize the issue.

"The biggest worry for those with epilepsy is that they'll have a seizure at night, no one will know, and they'll die," Hackbarth said. "These dogs can recognize someone is having a seizure, ring a bell to notify and roll the individual onto their side to save them until help comes."

Another set of volunteers, known as the Weekend Warriors, take a dog home for one weekend each month. This allows the dog to experience the sights, sounds and smells outside of prison walls while still completing training.

“It gives you something to do and a way to give back to the community without having the commitment to having a dog full time,” Hackbarth said. “It reminds the dogs what it’s like to be in a home and how to go out in public.”

Being handled by many individuals reminds the dog to complete tasks given, regardless of who is giving the command.

“These dogs might go to a recipient as young as 5 years old, so we want to make sure they’re going to do the command,” Hackbarth said.

Dogs typically complete training about age 2 before being placed with their future life partner. A ceremony is held at the prison, where the inmate

handler hands off the dog for the last time to the recipient.

“The inmate handlers will talk with the recipients and tell what they know about the dog, and any secret tricks they taught them,” Hackbarth said. “On that day, the inmate handler is a hero in everyone’s eyes.”

Inmate handlers also learn valuable skills while providing support to individuals in need.

Domesti-PUPS also rescues “unadoptable dogs” from shelters and trains them on basic obedience and house manners at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution before being available to adopt.

“Many of these people haven’t had the opportunity to love someone or have someone love them back, so it gives them a sense of purpose, and they truly get attached to these animals,” Hackbarth said.

Due to space limitations in the prisons, Domesti-PUPS has about 35 dogs in the program at a time,



**It’s satisfying to know the difference**

**Domesti-PUPS makes in lives.”**

*– Anne Kastl, Domesti-PUPS secretary and treasurer*

and places three to six fully trained service dogs each year.

If at any time during the process a dog is injured or is deemed unable to proceed with training, a career change can help them find a family and potentially become a therapy or companion dog. Domesti-PUPS provides public training for Edu-PUPS in the schools, and therapy dogs going in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, doctor clinics and other public spaces.

Anne Kastl first got involved with Domesti-PUPS when Hackbarth asked her to hold a dog she was watching over the weekend.

*Continued on page 20.*

## Lincoln Housing Authority

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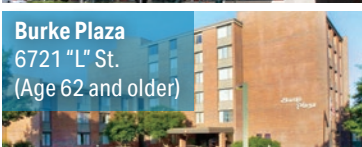
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# Transforming Lives, One Dog at a Time

Continued from page 19.

“The next thing you know, I’m taking a dog on the weekend,” she said.

Now, 14 years later, she still helps with the dogs and serves as Domesti-PUPS secretary and treasurer.

“It’s satisfying to know the difference Domesti-PUPS makes in lives,” she said. “When you see that dog graduate, you never lose that. They’re all unique, but how the dog touches each person’s life is different. It changes the lives of the inmates, volunteers and especially the recipients. That dog impacts the whole community.

Domesti-PUPS always is looking for volunteers, and this experience can be a good way for dog lovers to help if unable to commit to owning a dog.

“We provide everything you need, including food and training for the dog,” Hackbarth said. “Not everyone can take a dog, but we have opportunities that don’t involve dogs, too.”

In August, Domesti-PUPS will move to its new home near 46th and “Y” streets, and help will be needed to paint, transport flooring, pack and organize.

For more information, visit [www.domesti-pups.org](http://www.domesti-pups.org). 



Two individuals who recently received their Domesti-PUPS service dogs include Kelley Sperry, left, with Moxie, and RL Burton with Rocky.

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# Seniors Foundation Commends Individuals Supporting Older Adults

On May 22, individuals dedicated to supporting older adults gathered at the Country Club of Lincoln for the Seniors Foundation's 11th Keystone Award Luncheon.

Keynote speaker was Jeffrey Ahl, a 35-year architect focused on housing for aging individuals.

Ahl shared insight about his yearlong journey of research, which involved living in numerous nursing homes across the country to experience living as an elder. This served as inspiration for his firm name, arCureitecture, and how services are provided. He encouraged everyone to imagine and act on an idea that could enhance the daily living for older adults.

Lloyd Hinkley was honored with the 2024 Seniors Foundation Keystone Award, recognizing an individual who provides a lasting legacy to enhance the quality of life for older adults in Lincoln.

Hinkley has given his time, service and money to causes important to him. Hinkley, who now is in his 90s, also served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1952 to 1953 during the Korean War.

Elected to Lincoln City Council in 1961, Hinkley served two terms under four mayors. For 10 years, he was on the Lincoln Housing Authority Board, seven years on the Nebraska Real Estate Commission, three years on the Lincoln Hospital Association Board, five years on the Real Estate Appraisal Board and had a stint on the Lincoln/Lancaster County Master Plan Review Committee.



*Seniors Foundation President Roger Lempke, left, presents the Keystone Award to Lloyd Hinkley, right, and his wife, Donna.*

In 1996, Hinkley was appointed to the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Hospital Alternative and the City's Congestion Management Task Force. From 1998 to 2007, he served older adults by co-founding and co-owning Legacy Terrace, a family-owned and operated retirement community in Northeast Lincoln. He also served a combined 26 years on the Lincoln General Hospital and Bryan Foundation boards and, most recently, was involved in The Bridge Behavioral Health Board and Seniors Foundation,

where he served as president from 1995 to 1997 and later as a board member. He lent his 57 years of real estate experience during the leasing and development of Victory Park, which now provides medical care and housing to veterans. Hinkley has served the Seniors Foundation for



*Seniors Foundation President Roger Lempke, left, presents the Seniors Foundation Remembers Award to The Lexington Assisted Living Center CEO Oat Whitney and Sarah Bando on behalf of Candice Herzog.*

more than 10 years, and his legacy of service will have a lasting impact on the Lincoln community.

This year's Seniors Foundation Remembers Awards honored two individuals for their lasting contributions: Candice Herzog and Ben Kroeze.

Herzog was described as someone who was generous, trusting, encouraging, compassionate, fair, phenomenal and had infectious laughter. She spent her life serving others, most recently as The Lexington Assisted Living Center administrator. Herzog was passionate about the idea everyone deserved to be treated equally and should be able to live and work in a safe and homelike community. She took great pride in maintaining the facility to be a welcoming place to live and work, just as she did her own home.

Kroeze was honored for his decades-long career in social work, caring for developmentally disabled adults for eight years, spending 18 years investigating abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults before dedicating the last eight years as supervisor for Adult Protective Services. Kroeze continually advocated and educated the public and professionals about Adult Protective Services, and he frequently worked with Aging Partners and other community entities to problem-solve difficult situations.

He also served on the Supreme Court Commission on Guardianships and Conservatorships and was on the Lincoln/Lancaster TRIAD. Kroeze cared deeply about elder justice and felt a sense of duty to raise public awareness on the issue. <sup>LW</sup>



Jude and Cathy Kroeze accept the Seniors Foundation Remembers Award recognizing Ben Kroeze from Seniors Foundation President Roger Lempke, right.

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# Project Connect Helps Those Facing Homelessness

Homelessness in Lincoln impacts individuals from all walks of life. About 2,400 people will experience living on the streets or in shelters in the city annually, with roughly 22 percent of them being children under the age of 18.

“That doesn’t include the many people who are doubled up with friends or family, or those who are near homelessness and have few resources to sustain stable housing,” said Lee Heflebower, 20-year member of the Lincoln Homeless Coalition.

Lincoln Homeless Coalition is a collaborative group of 45 member agencies and organizations addressing the issue. The agencies work with people living in poverty, families, youth, and those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. This often is due to factors such as unemployment, domestic violence, behavioral health issues, difficulties finding affordable housing and health care.

“These supportive services are key to getting people connected to what they need,” Heflebower said. “No matter what the household situation is there are agencies to provide wrap-around support to address those issues.”

Project Connect has been an annual event since 2009 at the Pinnacle Bank Arena where local organizations, businesses and volunteers come together to provide a one-day, one-stop shop of information and services for those experiencing or who are at-risk of homelessness.

Every guest is matched with a volunteer called a navigator to discuss and ensure their needs are addressed. With more than 100 booths, services include vaccinations, eye and dental exams, foot care, basic health screenings, haircuts, photo booth, basic veterinary care; and there is information about legal issues, housing, financial assistance, employment and social services. A separate area for veterans and child care also is provided.

“Having everything in one place makes it as easy as possible for the individuals, and they may find something helpful to them,” Heflebower said.

This year’s event at Pinnacle Bank Arena is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 16; please confirm at [www.facebook.com/LincolnHomelessCoalition](http://www.facebook.com/LincolnHomelessCoalition) or [www.lincolnhomelesscoalition.org](http://www.lincolnhomelesscoalition.org).


Heflebower expressed the need for volunteers and



*Project Connect helps connect the homeless and those near homelessness with resources in the community.*

encourages people to be on the lookout for those you may know needing information.

“It’s important to reach out and help your neighbors,” she said. “It’s a misconception that people living in poverty are visibly struggling. The reality is that many are employed, have families, or are older adults or veterans on fixed incomes.”

To find out more about the Homeless Coalition, Project Connect or to volunteer, visit [www.lincolnhomelesscoalition.org](http://www.lincolnhomelesscoalition.org). 

## 2024 Resident of the Year

*Presented by Nebraska Assisted Living Association*



**Ila Dragoo** (lower right) of The Lexington with son Bruce and daughter-in-law Julie



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# Berry Fun

By Jill Engel, Aging Partners Nutrition

When it comes to berries, they are fun for everyone! They come in many different sizes, shapes, colors and tastes. All berries come packed with a variety of nutrients and health benefits. Some of the most common are blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries. Each contains unique tastes and textures and can be incorporated into our diet in various ways. Let us take a plunge and see what lies ahead on our very berry fun adventure.

Blueberries are sweet in taste, smooth in texture and are a perfect addition to a breakfast smoothie or lunchtime salad. They are rich in protective plant compounds, such as anthocyanins and antioxidants, and can help fight inflammation in the

body. Blueberries can improve eye function, brain and heart, and may help reduce the risk of certain types of cancer.

Choose blueberries that are plump, firm, uniform in shape and have a blue color with a slight dusty appearance. Avoid those that show signs of mold, are soft or shriveled. Blueberries can be stored in the fridge for up to about 10 days.

Raspberries can be sweet yet tart and are great additions to a side of yogurt, sweet desserts and as an extra splash of flavor in water. These brightly colored berries are packed with fiber and polyphenol

compounds; both playing a unique role in limiting the chances of developing cancer. One cup of these delicious berries contains eight grams of fiber, which can help lower the risk of heart disease and help you remain “fuller” longer.

*Continued on page 26.*



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# Berry Fun

Continued from page 25.

Choose raspberries that are firm, dry, plump and avoid berries that are either wet or moldy. Raspberries should be stored in the produce drawer of the fridge for one to three days.

Blackberries can have a unique combination of juicy

flavors ranging from sweet to tart, depending on your personal tasting palate. Throw these splendid berries on top of your salad greens or pair them with nuts as part of a healthy snack. Blackberries are packed with fiber and vitamin C. One cup of these contains eight grams of fiber and 100 grams of vitamin C (35 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance).

Choose blackberries that are shiny in appearance and avoid those that are bruised or leaking juice. Store in the produce drawer of the fridge for three to six days.

Strawberries are the most widely grown fruit and probably the most popular of all the berries! Strawberries add a great flavor and can complement any

meal or snack. They pack an excellent source of vitamin C and are rich in plant polyphenols, which help protect the immune system.

To get the most berry goodness for your buck, choose strawberries that are shiny, firm and bright in color. The green tops should appear fresh, fully intact and have a nice green color. Avoid those that are leaking, mushy or shriveled. While they may last up to one week in your fridge, the quality will be best within three days. Remember, as is the rule with most berries, do not wash them until they are ready to be eaten.

When storing, don't let one bad berry spoil the rest. Check for damaged ones and dispose of them immediately. Strawberries, blueberries and raspberries last longer if stored in the coldest place



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in the fridge, often in the produce drawers.

Berries can also be frozen so you can enjoy them long after the season is over. Simply spread them on a

baking sheet and place in the freezer. Once they are frozen, transfer them to a freezer-safe storage bag to enjoy later. When berries aren't in season, consider frozen ones without added sugar.

As you can see from just a small sampling, berries are packed with fantastic nutrients and compounds to aid in our health and well-being. There are a variety of ways we can incorporate them into our diets. Next time at the store, spend a little more time browsing through the different varieties and have yourself a very berry adventure! 



### Blueberry Blast Smoothie

*(makes two servings)*

2 cups frozen unsweetened blueberries

½ cup orange juice

¾ cup low-fat or non-fat vanilla yogurt

½ medium frozen banana

½ tsp. pure vanilla extract

Place blueberries, orange juice, yogurt, banana and vanilla into a blender. Blend for 20 or 30 seconds or until the contents are thick and smooth. Pour into two glasses and serve immediately.

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# Staying Self-Sufficient

By Mitch Sump, Aging Partners program coordinator

**“E**very single human is wild born. It is impossible to remove that mark. Wild living is not about returning to forager hunter status. It is about developing relationships with what is wild, about knowing a small part of wild nature and letting it live inside the soul!”

– Craig Foster

As a country boy whose father believed in the old method of farming, (i.e., not planting ditch to ditch and believing that trees are not overgrown weeds to be removed) I have an appreciation of wildlife. In my 56-plus years, I have seen bald eagles become something easily seen versus a rare treat. Red foxes, coyotes and bobcats have returned in numbers to the Midwest and assumed their place in the food chain. Plus, numerous raptors along with bald eagles made a comeback from illegal hunting and pesticides.

Our move a year ago to Victory Park has given participants and staff opportunities to see wildlife not available to us while at the Downtown Senior Center, except for the occasional brown bat that found its way into the building! Out at Victory Park, we commonly see red foxes, Canadian geese, raccoons, opossums and one large red tail hawk. I have also seen whitetail deer and have caught the lingering odor of a striped skunk. All in all, it is a nice break while coming to or from work.

So, why all the talk about wildlife? We at Handy Home Services get calls all the time about getting rid of critters, stopping critters from getting in, etc. Here is a short breakdown of the most common critters you might have appear in your yard and what to do about them.

**Rabbits** can cause damage to vegetable/flower gardens and will chew on the bark of young trees, potentially killing them. However, there are ways to stop this from happening. Good fencing or screening around young plants and trees will stop all but the most



determined bunny. I have had the best luck, however, with a product called Liquid Fence. Sold as a concentrate, mixed with water and sprayed on the desired area, it is fantastic! It is naturally produced and, if you wash your produce prior to eating, is completely harmless (warning: it repels rabbits with smell; when you use it, you’ll know why! Think August afternoon driving behind a rendering truck).

I enjoy watching **squirrels**; but as funny as they are, they will damage property. Squirrels are opportunistic and have no problems moving from a hollow tree into your eaves and attic spaces. The very best thing you can do is make sure your eaves and rooflines are well maintained with no loose boards or siding. Also, and I know this one might receive some disagreement, don’t feed them! I know folks put out corn and seeds so they can watch them play, but squirrels just might assume you are looking for a roommate. There is plenty of food around the state for them to survive.

**Opossums** may be the most misunderstood



## GRANDMAS & GRANDPAS NEEDED

**55 and older? Want to make a difference? Become a classroom grandparent!**



Volunteers serve in Community Action Head Start classrooms to provide extra support as a caring grandparent figure. Volunteers receive an hourly stipend, meals while on duty, transportation reimbursement, and training.

To get started, contact Sam Bates at (402) 875-9320 or send an email to [sbates@communityactionatwork.org](mailto:sbates@communityactionatwork.org)



The Community Action Foster Grandparent Program is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, genetic information and military service. Accommodations may be possible for those with limited English proficiency.

animals in Nebraska. Too many rumors about rabies – which they are very resistant to – have plagued the only North American marsupial. They will dig in yards and eat grubs, so in reality, they are helping your yard. They also consume ticks! They will dig in garbage cans, but bagging your trash and having secure lids will put a stop to that. Fun fact: Opossums are not affected by the venom of rattlesnakes.


Much like squirrels (need a roommate?) or opossums (trash can equals buffet), **raccoons** can be very destructive (they are cute, though!). Your best bet in dealing with raccoons is to maintain your property as much as possible so

they can't gain access, and limit the availability of food.

**Red foxes** have made a pretty good home for themselves in Lincoln as growing coyote populations in the rural areas have pushed them into town. These little canines are highly adaptable and, for the most part, are not destructive. Common problems include trash can foraging and making their dens under porches, garages and outdoor sheds. Once again, proper maintenance and limiting access will do wonders. If you are ever out walking and see a fox following you, don't panic! Unless



they are behaving aggressively, what they are doing is called “escorting” or “pacing.” They are following you out of what they consider their territory. All wild canines do this in some form, normally when young ones are in a den.

As usual, I'm running out of space! It is my hope that you can get out and enjoy the “wild nature” of your neighborhood this summer. 







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# Aging Partners Health and Fitness

## Meet Aging Partners' New Community Health Educator

By Tito Vigan, Aging Partners Health and Fitness

**M**y name is Francis “Tito” Vigan, and I’m the Community Health Educator at Aging Partners Health and Fitness. I’m a National Academy of Sports Medicine certified personal trainer and nutrition coach.

I developed my passion for training and exercise a decade ago, which led me to become a bodybuilding athlete, in which I learned about diet, exercise and working toward something I believed in by becoming a better version of myself every day. I knew I wanted to help people achieve their fitness goals and share my knowledge and skills with them, so I got my personal trainer certification.

I worked at different gyms, helping countless people with different backgrounds and abilities. In 2020, when most gyms shut down due to COVID-19, I started helping my in-laws, both nearing their 70s, with their fitness goals. I had so much fun working out with them that I realized I wanted my next career to be “working with older adults.”

Having transitioned to Aging



Partners, one of the many questions I often get from my participants is, “Am I too old to exercise or strength train?” The answer is a resounding “no!”

In fact, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) conducted research on aging adults losing strength and balance due to muscle mass loss called sarcopenia. Sarcopenia has been connected to weakness, fatigue and lower energy levels, as well as difficulty standing, walking and climbing stairs. NIA-supported scientist Roger A. Fielding, Ph.D., determined the best recipe for improving physical function and avoiding disability is a combination of walking and resistance training. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines also suggest the power of strength training can reduce the signs and symptoms of many diseases and chronic conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, obesity and back pain.

Because we know everyone is different and we are all going through life at a different pace, Aging Partners Health and Fitness staff work with older adults in wheelchairs, walkers and canes, as well as those who walk independently. Our program also includes a variety of evidence-based fall prevention programs like Tai Chi and StrongBodies, and other fitness classes like Qigong, Chair Yoga and Dance for Life.

I love what I do, and I take pride in it. The best part of my job is when participants come back to either the fitness center or class and tell me about their progress or results. Sometimes it’s small things like, “I can go up and down the stairs now,” or “I can get down and



*Tito Vigan, Community Health Educator, Aging Partners Health and Fitness*

up without being afraid now.” And the most common one I hear is “Now I have more energy to play and keep up with my grandkids!”

Please call us today at 402-441-7575 or come by Aging Partners Health and Fitness, 600 S. 70th St., to make an appointment with me or Lisa Lavene, an American College of Sports Medicine certified trainer, for consultation. We help aging adults gain exercise and resistance training knowledge, and we will help you learn how to use the equipment, free weights and the cardio machines safely.

Whether you are looking to build muscle, get stronger, boost your energy throughout the day or increase your daily physical activities, we are here for you and will give you the tools necessary to get the job done. Stop questioning and limiting yourself about what you can and cannot do and take control of your life by acting or making a decision that will benefit your mental and physical well-being today.

I like to remind older adults that when it comes to muscles and strength, when you don’t use it, you lose it. It is never too late to invest in your health, because you owe it to yourself and your loved ones! **LW**

# Fumbling in the Darkness: A Story of Love and the Labor of Spousal Caregiving

When you're in complete darkness, there's a vast difference between trying to find a light switch and teaching yourself to become an electrician.

The latter describes how Judy James and her husband, Michael, felt when she was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease at age 61. The couple desperately sought to cast a light on the right doorways and illuminate the path ahead.

### Where It Began

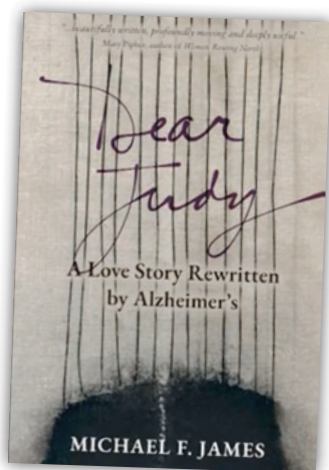
Michael and Judy met while in undergraduate school, he studying painting and she, design and photography.

"She was the total opposite of me in every way," Michael said. "That may have been one reason we were successful as a couple. We were young, and we didn't know what we were doing, so we invented it as we went along."

While Michael was in graduate school, they married in 1972, and later welcomed a son. They aspired to make enough money to have the life they wanted, which included time for family and creativity.

"We were lucky; we had all of those things," Michael said.

As they'd long resided in the New England area, Michael and Judy expressed an interest in moving in their 50s. Michael suggested



Nebraska after returning from the inaugural advisory board meeting for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's International Quilt Study Center. In fall 2000, Michael joined the faculty of the Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design at UNL, the IQSC's parent department, and in 2005

became its chairperson.

### The Imminent Diagnosis

Judy received her diagnosis in 2009 after taking a cognitive exam while applying for long-term care insurance. She was denied. Left shocked and unprepared, the Jameses had no experience with Alzheimer's disease, which is the most common cause of dementia.

"Neither of our families or friends had a history with it," Michael said.

The Jameses continued on and Michael became Judy's primary caregiver while still working.

"That puts a different spin on the notion 'until death do us part,'" Michael said about watching Judy's health decline. "Along with the day-to-day challenges that dementia presented, it was a struggle to maintain the quality of life we'd worked so hard to attain."

Although rewarding, caregiving can become a burden for family members as their loved one loses independence and the ability to



Michael and Judy James in 2014. Photo taken by Dave Kostelnik.

participate in decisions. The 24/7 emotional and physical strain can make a caregiver weary. While respite can help, it's not always available.

"We certainly had friends who continued to socialize with us and some who went on walks with Judy, but most of our friends were fully employed professionals with their own families," Michael said. "They had stresses of their own."

Caregivers are often stretched for time to focus on themselves as they're constantly attuned to their loved one's whereabouts in the home or daily living processes such as bathing, dressing, and preparing and serving meals. Even short stretches of respite can make the situation feel more tolerable.

"If you have a friend or family member who's tasked with shouldering the caregiving load for a dementia sufferer, your gift of time and a little imagination can go a long way to making their situation more manageable," Michael said.

*Continued on page 32.*

# Fumbling in the Darkness

Continued from page 31.

Showing up and offering companionship and help are an expression of friendship and compassion; they're also antidotes to the isolation that often engulfs dementia households. In the beginning stages of dementia, ask the caregiver what would make the outing successful. Offering to take the individual for a walk or out for a meal or beverage at a nearby quiet restaurant can offer the caregiver an opportunity to relax and unwind.

As the disease progresses, spending time with sufferers in the home may be the safest option, giving the caregiver a chance to step out briefly for a relaxed lunch with friends, some casual shopping or to play a round of golf or tennis.

"During that time, other family

and friends become that dementia sufferer's connection to a different experience, which can enrich both their life and the volunteers," Michael said. "A gift of respite can be one of the most impactful ways to answer the question, 'What can I do to help?'"

## Moving Forward

Life was good for most of the Jameses' 43-year marriage. As the disease progressed, Michael hired in-home caregivers for Judy so he could continue to work, but the expense added to the financial burden. Judy ultimately spent her final five months living full-time at a memory care residence.



Michael James. Photo taken by Dave Kostelnik.



A photo of Judy a year into her diagnosis taken by Michael James in 2010.

Michael grieved following Judy's death in 2015 and later felt compelled to share their story. His advice for those facing an Alzheimer's diagnosis involves early education and preparation, including selecting a financial advisor to help plan for the expenses of caregiving.

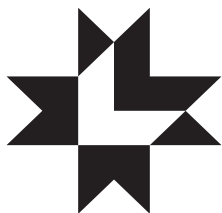
"The process is slow and doesn't happen overnight," he said. "Caring for someone with cognitive agency is one thing, but caregiving for a

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dementia sufferer is very different. In situations like this, it's not a reciprocal relationship. You give up a lot when you take on the mantle of caregiver, and it's best to do it consciously and deliberately."

In the last months of their journey, Michael updated family and friends through the CaringBridge website. His posts became the foundation for his book, "Dear Judy: A Love Story Rewritten by Alzheimer's."

Michael retired from UNL in January 2020 and the pandemic that followed gave him time to detail his experiences. Overall, he found the process difficult, having to step away from it at times, but healing.

The compelling memoir is filled with compassionate short notes to Judy, followed by an exploration of the illness's day-to-day trials and how they worked through it. The account details the shift in their marital relationship and his transition to being a caregiver.

Michael hopes the book provides those facing a similar diagnosis and their loved ones with a better idea of what might lay ahead and help "turn the lights on."

The book can be purchased locally at the Francie & Finch Bookshop, Barnes & Noble Lincoln SouthPointe; or online at [pineedenpress.com](http://pineedenpress.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com). It also can be found at select Lincoln City Libraries. 

# Nebraska Family Caregiver Support

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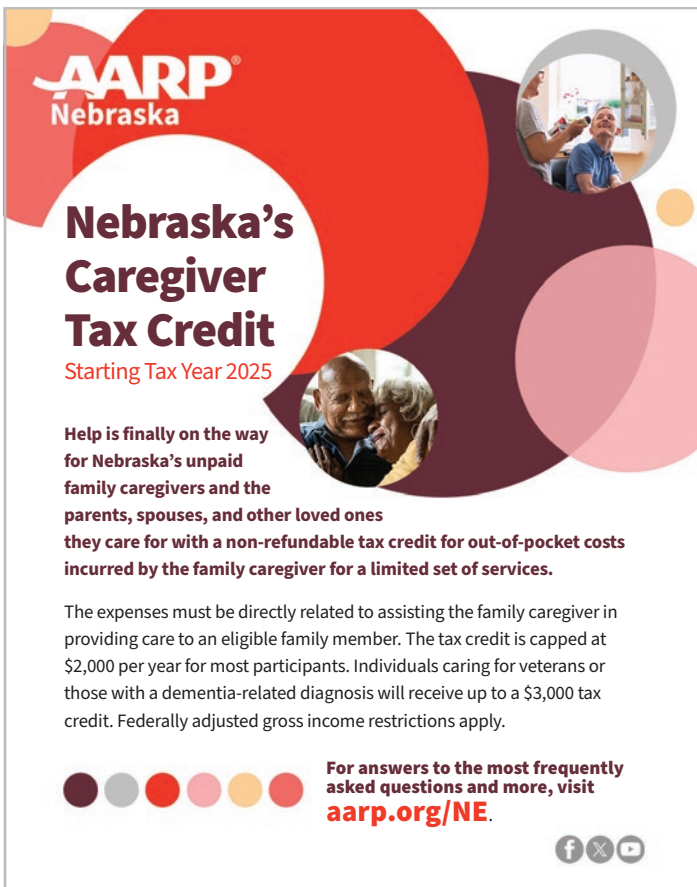
1-866-RESPITE

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[respite.ne.gov](http://respite.ne.gov)




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Tax Credit**  
Starting Tax Year 2025

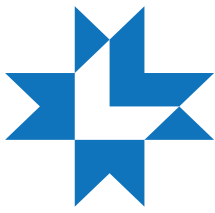


Help is finally on the way for Nebraska's unpaid family caregivers and the parents, spouses, and other loved ones they care for with a non-refundable tax credit for out-of-pocket costs incurred by the family caregiver for a limited set of services.

The expenses must be directly related to assisting the family caregiver in providing care to an eligible family member. The tax credit is capped at \$2,000 per year for most participants. Individuals caring for veterans or those with a dementia-related diagnosis will receive up to a \$3,000 tax credit. Federally adjusted gross income restrictions apply.

For answers to the most frequently asked questions and more, visit [aarp.org/NE](http://aarp.org/NE).





**LINCOLN**  
Aging Partners



## Call 402-441-7070 in Lincoln or toll-free, **800-247-0938.**

### AGING PARTNERS

600 S. 70th St., Bldg. 2  
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402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938  
aging.lincoln.ne.gov  
Serving Butler, Fillmore, Lancaster,  
Polk, Saline, Saunders, Seward and York  
counties.

**Key for Services:** ▲ = Lancaster only

### MISSION

Aging Partners plans, coordinates and advocates for older people in an eight-county area. Our mission is to enhance daily living, expand personal choices and educate the community to ensure the independence and full life of the people we serve.

### BENEFITS COUNSELING AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Medicare** - what you need to know when you turn age 65; working past age 65; Parts A, B, D and Advantage Plans; Medicare supplements, yearly changes, updates and open enrollment; complaints, errors and appeals; low-income assistance programs.
- **We also help with:** Social Security overview; Medicaid; long-term care insurance; budgeting and bill paying; and Homestead Tax Exemption.
- **Legal Counseling** - Free legal advice and referral services for those who meet financial guidelines.

### HEALTH, FITNESS AND NUTRITION

- The Schmieding Foundation Center for Active Living Fitness Center - Cardio and strength training equipment. A certified personal trainer is available by appointment.  
▲ 402-441-7575
- **Exercise** - Tai Chi, chair yoga, Qigong and dance classes are available at

several locations. Daily fitness programs on LNKTV City (ALLO channel 2, Spectrum channel 1300 and Kinetic channel 5) and LNKTV Health (ALLO channel 3, Spectrum channel 1301 and Kinetic channel 10). ▲

- **Senior Health Promotion Center** - University of Nebraska-Medical Center and Aging Partners provide comprehensive foot care along with blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and bone density screenings by appointment. ▲ 402-441-7506

### HANDY HOME SERVICES, LIFELINE® AND TRANSPORTATION

- **Durable Medical Equipment** - Providing items that address short- and long-term needs. We have various lightly used and/or new in-the-box items in stock including crutches, walkers, canes, wheelchairs, bath chairs and toilet risers. 402-441-7032
- **Handy Home Services** - Minor home repairs and maintenance including mowing, leaky faucets, painting and broken light fixtures.  
▲ 402-441-7030
- **Lifeline® Personal Emergency Response System** - A 24-hour emergency access at the press of a button. ▲ 402-441-8816
- **Ride within Lincoln to the Centers** - Schedule a ride to your Aging Partners Center (handicap accessible).  
▲ 402-441-7158
- **Lancaster County Public Rural Transit** - Scheduled transportation to and from Lincoln to rural Lancaster County areas. (handicap accessible).  
▲ 402-441-7031

A listing of other options in the community is available at 402-441-7070.

- **Alzheimer's Disease** - Information and referral. 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938
- **Caregiver Support Services** - Caregivers take care of family members and friends. But who takes care of the caregiver? Support groups provide hope, information and a safe environment to share concerns. Sessions are led by a Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner. ▲ 402-441-7575
- **Health Education Programs** - A variety of topics assisting individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Nutrition** - Noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment and special holiday meals are available at some centers. 402-441-3480

### LIVING WELL MAGAZINE

This quarterly publication features stories of interest to older adults and is mailed directly to their homes. To suggest a story idea or advertise with Living Well, call David Norris at 402-441-6156 or email [dnorris@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:dnorris@lincoln.ne.gov). To receive Living Well by email instead of in the mail, call 402-441-6146 or email [delrod@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:delrod@lincoln.ne.gov).

### LIVE & LEARN

A monthly TV show for and about older adults on LNKTV City (ALLO channel 2, Spectrum channel 1300, Kinetic channel 1005) and LNKTV.lincoln.ne.gov, or Live & Learn's YouTube channel at <http://lincoln.ne.gov/LiveAndLearn>.

- Mondays at 11 a.m.
- Wednesdays at 5 p.m.
- Thursdays at 7 p.m.
- Fridays at 11:30 a.m.
- Sundays at 3:30 p.m.

These are minimum airing times. Show re-airs at various other times throughout the month.

## NEIGHBORLNK

This program connects qualified, authorized volunteers with homebound seniors (age 60 and over) and persons with disabilities who seek additional support such as grocery pickup and delivery, errands such as food and medication delivery, and friendly phone visits.

▲ 402-441-6076 or 402-441-7575

## SENIOR CENTERS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Social events and activities, health and educational programs. We offer noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment and special holiday meals. Transportation to the centers is available for a suggested contribution. Four centers in Lincoln and three in Lancaster County.

▲ 402-441-7158

### Lincoln/Lancaster County Centers

- Belmont Center: 402-441-7990  
Belmont Recreation Center  
1234 Judson St., Lincoln
- Northeast Center: 402-441-7151  
6310 Platte Ave., Lincoln
- Washington Street Center  
402-441-7157  
Grace Lutheran Church  
2225 Washington St., Lincoln
- Victory Park Center: 402-441-7154  
600 S. 70th St., Lincoln
- Bennet Center: 402-416-7693  
American Legion Hall  
970 Monroe St., Bennet
- Firth Center: 402-416-7693  
Community Center  
311 Nemaha Blvd., Firth
- Hickman Center: 402-416-7693  
Hickman Community Center  
115 Locust St., Hickman

## SENIORS FOUNDATION

The charitable foundation that plans, advocates for, and supports the programs and services of Aging Partners. To contribute or volunteer, call 402-441-6179 or visit [seniorsfoundation.org](http://seniorsfoundation.org).

## INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

Provides help for older adults and their caregivers to resolve questions and concerns about aging. Services include referrals, counseling, social work and care management. Start here to determine alternatives and arrange services in the Aging Partners service area.

## LONG-TERM CARE OPTIONS/ CARE MANAGEMENT

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)** - The Aging and Disability Resource Center goal is to assist Nebraskans in accessing services and support to help meet their long-term care needs.
- **Home and Community-based Waiver Services** - State funded in-home services for those who are Medicaid-eligible and choose to live at home or use community-based services.
- **Senior Care Options** - Long-term care and assessment for Medicaid-eligible persons seeking nursing home care.
- **Assisted Living and Nursing Facilities Resource Listings**

## MULTI-COUNTY CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Providing professional assistance in assessing needs, planning and coordinating home care.

**All Counties: 800-247-0938**

### Jean Holt, Coordinator

Providing professional assistance in assessing needs, planning and coordinating home care.

- Butler County  
Becky Romshek, 402-367-4537
- Fillmore County  
Rhonda Stokebrand, 402-759-4922
- Polk County  
Becky Romshek, 402-747-5731
- Saline County  
Kelly Grimes, 402-441-7070
- Saunders County  
Kaylee Huenink, 402-416-9376
- Seward County  
Kaylee Huenink, 402-416-9376
- York County  
Christina Kaping, 402-362-7626

## MULTI-COUNTY PROGRAMS

### Coordinator Jill Engel

- Butler County Senior Services  
Diana McDonald, 402-367-6131
- Fillmore County Senior Services  
Brenda Motis, 402-759-4922
- Polk County Senior Services  
Mark DeMers, 402-764-2711
- Saline County Aging Services  
Lori Moldenhauer, 402-821-3330
- Seward County Aging Services  
Alison Rook, 402-646-7110
- York County Aging Services  
Lori Byers, 402-362-7626

## MULTI-COUNTY SENIOR CENTERS

### Butler County

- David City Senior Center  
592 "D" St., David City  
402-367-6131

### Fillmore County

- Exeter Senior Center  
217 S. Exeter Ave., Exeter  
402-266-2133
- Fairmont Senior Center  
519 6th Ave., Fairmont  
402-268-2831
- Geneva Senior Center  
1120 "F" St., Geneva  
402-759-6729

### Polk County

- Osceola Senior Center  
441 Hawkeye St., Osceola  
402-747-8227
- Polk Senior Center  
230 N. Main St., Polk  
402-765-2311
- Shelby Senior Center  
230 N. Walnut St., Shelby  
402-527-5158

### Saline County

- DeWitt Senior Center  
202 E. Fillmore Ave., DeWitt  
402-683-4325

### Seward County

- Milford Senior Center  
105 "B" St., Milford  
402-761-3367
- Seward LIED Senior Center  
1010 Manor Drive West, Seward  
402-643-4466
- Utica Senior Center  
520 "D" St., Utica, NE 68456  
402-534-3435

### York County

- McCool Junction Senior Diners  
c/o Village Hall  
323 E. "M" St., McCool Junction  
402-724-2525
- York Leisure Home (meal site only)  
215 N. Lincoln Ave., York  
402-362-5900
- York Senior Center  
725 Nebraska Ave., York  
402-362-2496

## SENIOR CARE OPTIONS (SCO) AND MEDICAID WAIVER

- 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

# Aging Partners News and Events

Call 402-441-7575 for Health and Fitness classes or 402-441-7158 for event information.  
[aging.lincoln.ne.gov](http://aging.lincoln.ne.gov)

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When you receive *Living Well* magazine

by email, you have direct access to many services. Click your mouse on any website listed and you are linked directly to a service or advertiser's website.

There are wonderful stories in every issue of *Living Well*. By visiting the Aging Partners website, you will find current and past issues. Contact Deb Elrod at 402-441-6146 or [delrod@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:delrod@lincoln.ne.gov) to sign up.



## Health and Fitness

### Schmieding Center for Active Living Fitness Center

600 S. 70th St.  
Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All are welcome at the fitness center. Cardio equipment, strength training equipment, free weights, balance, and other exercise aids are available. There is a \$10 monthly suggested contribution for ages 60 and over. A \$15 fee is required for individuals under age 60. A certified personal trainer is available Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only at no extra charge.

For most Health and Fitness classes, there is a \$4 per class suggested contribution for age 60 and over. A \$5 per class fee is required for those under age 60. Preregistration is required for all classes by calling 402-441-7575. Please register early. Classes that do not have sufficient enrollment will be canceled.

### Evidence-Based Tai Chi Classes

*NOTE: Because all Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention classes are progressive, no registrations will be accepted after the fourth class of each session. Tai Chi class sizes are restricted due to space limitations; therefore, classes fill up quickly.*

### Tai Chi for Arthritis Level I and Fall Prevention

Eastridge Presbyterian Church  
1135 Eastridge Drive  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
1 to 2 p.m.

Aug. 20 through Nov. 7

This class is beneficial to people with or without arthritis and can help prevent falls. Each session includes breathing techniques and warm up and cool down exercises. Participants will practice one or two movements per lesson, progressively leading to completing the core movements. Suggested contribution is \$2 per class or \$48 per session.

### Tai Chi for Arthritis Level II and Fall Prevention

American Lutheran Church  
4200 Vine St.  
Mondays and Wednesdays  
10 to 11 a.m.

Sept. 9 through Dec. 2 (no class Nov. 11)

This class is only available to those who have completed at least one full session of the Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Level I. Suggested contribution is \$2 per class or \$48 per session.

### Chair Yoga

Eastridge Presbyterian Church  
1135 Eastridge Drive

Chair yoga is one of the gentlest forms of yoga available. It is a unique style that adapts yoga positions and poses through creative use of a chair. Poses are seated, or the chair is used for support during standing and balance poses. Emphasis will be on breathing, balance and taking things at your own pace. Chair yoga is suitable for all ages,

fitness levels and physical conditions. Beginners are welcome.

- Wednesdays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.  
July 17 through Oct. 2
- Fridays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.  
July 26 through Oct. 11

### Dance for Life

Each class focuses on balance, strength and cardio health through a unique combination of dance steps done to popular oldies music. Synchronized movements isolate and strengthen muscle groups, increase heart rate, and improve core stability. Participants warm-up from the chair, move to standing, transition to dance then cool down with standing and seated movements.

- American Lutheran Church  
4200 Vine St.  
Mondays, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.  
Sept. 9 through Dec. 23  
(no class Nov. 11)
- Auld Pavilion  
1650 Memorial Drive  
Wednesdays, 10 to 11 a.m.  
Sept. 18 through Dec. 4

### Qigong Refresh and Recharge

This ancient, meditative practice focuses on slow, gentle movements which help to relieve aching muscles and stiff joints, improve balance, flexibility and increase energy. Movements begin from a chair, move to standing forms, closing with seated stretches, and stimulating breath exercises. This class is appropriate for individuals at all levels of ability.

- American Lutheran Church  
4200 Vine St.  
Tuesdays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.  
(note new time)  
Sept. 10 through Nov. 26
- Auld Pavilion  
1650 Memorial Drive  
Thursdays, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.  
Sept. 12 through Dec. 5  
(no class Nov. 28)

### **Evidence-Based StrongBodies Strength Training Program**

Victory Park Center, Classroom 105  
600 S. 70th St.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Beginners: 8:15 to 9:30 a.m.

Intermediate: 9:45 to 11:30 a.m.

Intermediate: 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (no class Aug. 8)

July 25 through Oct. 15

The benefits of strength training for older individuals have been studied extensively and include:

- Increased muscle mass and strength
- Improved bone density and reduced risk for osteoporosis and related fractures
- Reduced risk for diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, depression, and obesity
- Improved self-confidence, sleep, and vitality

The exercises in StrongBodies work all the major muscle groups, utilizing a combination of dumbbells, adjustable ankle weights and body weight. StrongBodies is an evidence-based class and meets twice per week for 12-week sessions. Class size is limited.

### **Evidence-Based Living Well with Chronic Conditions Workshop**

Victory Park Center  
600 S. 70th St.

Mondays, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Sept. 9 through Oct. 14

This interactive workshop is facilitated by trained leaders and helps individuals with chronic conditions take steps to manage their health and live happier, healthier lives. Topics include action planning, communication, healthy eating, physical activity, and medication management. Register early as class size will be limited! Suggested contributions of \$4 per class for age 60 and over.

### **Foot Clinics/Senior Health Promotion Services**

Aging Partners Foot Clinics and UNMC Senior Health Promotion Services are by appointment only. They are held at our new location at Victory Park Center (600 S. 70th Street).

Sanitation guidelines are followed.

Services are available to those age 60 and over. The following services are available on most clinic dates throughout the year: comprehensive foot care, blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol screenings, osteoporosis screenings, ear care, and health education. A \$20 suggested contribution will help these services continue.

Please call 402-441-7506 or 402-441-7575 for more information or to make an appointment for clinic services.

### **Aging Partners Events**

**Call 402-441-7158 for information and reservations.**

Call the individual centers to reserve a meal two days in advance. \$5 suggested contribution age 60 and over; \$10 fee under age 60.

#### **Belmont Center**

402-441-7990

- Musical Performance by Chris Sayre  
Friday, July 12 at 10 a.m.  
Lincoln native Chris Sayre performs traditional and contemporary folk music. Self-taught on over a dozen instruments, Chris takes audiences on a musical journey through history by exploring the songs and dance tunes of our common experience.
- Music BINGO with Elliott Piper  
Friday, Aug. 16 at 10 a.m.  
Get ready for a toe-tapping good time with Music Bingo with Elliott Piper. Reminisce over classic standards and forgotten favorites from the golden age of rock 'n roll!

#### **Northeast Center**

402-441-7151

- “Swimwear Throughout Time” presentation with Sue McLain  
Tuesday, July 16 at 10 a.m.  
Sue McLain, owner of Yesterday’s Lady, a vintage fashion museum/store in Beatrice, has been traveling the Midwest since 1991 sharing her extensive collection of clothing from 1840 through 1980 and teaching groups about the history of fashion. Sue has been collecting fashions

since 1985 and they are currently housed in an 1887 historic building in downtown Beatrice.

- Musical performance by Mary Link  
Friday, Aug. 2 at 10 a.m.  
Mary Link has had a passion for country music since she was a little girl. Mary has performed the Las Vegas, Reno and Tahoe circuit in the Midwest. Now, after raising two boys and living back in Omaha, she is still having fun entertaining audiences.
- “Nebraska State Fair History” presentation by Jim McKee  
Thursday, Aug. 29 at 10 a.m.  
Jim McKee is the owner of Lee Booksellers. He is the author of more than 1,400 articles and books on Lincoln and Nebraska history and numismatics. His weekly history column has appeared in the Lincoln Journal Star Sunday newspaper since 1993. He has been a local history adjunct professor at Southeast Community College in Lincoln since 1970.
- Musical performance by Tim Javorsky  
Friday, Sept. 27 at 10 a.m.  
Tim Javorsky is all about the numbers. His wife Dorothy calls him a triple threat: Saxophonist, singer, and bandleader. He not only plays alto and tenor sax, but soprano and baritone as well. Tim is also a vocal chameleon that can channel Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong, Elvis, Frank Sinatra, or whatever styling suits the music.

#### **Victory Park Center**

402-441-7154

- Grateful Growers Flower Arrangements  
Tuesday, July 2, Aug. 6 and Sept. 3 at 10 a.m.  
The Grateful Growers will bring the bounty of their gardens! There will be buckets and buckets of flowers for you to arrange, as well as an opportunity to help create arrangements for hospice patients. Donations of old vases welcome!

*Continued on page 38.*

# Aging Partners News and Events

Continued from page 37.

- Music by A Couple of Hanyaks  
Thursday, July 18 at 10 a.m.  
We'll celebrate our July birthdays while listening to Aging Partners driver and acoustic guitarist Monty Peck and his bandmate and upright bass player Ash Sharp. A Couple of Hanyaks will play a medley of classic rock, western tunes, blues, and folk!
- Music by Denise Howe  
Thursday, Aug. 8 at 10 a.m.  
We'll celebrate our August birthdays while listening to retired Northeast Center Manager Denise Howe!  
Denise is an accomplished guitarist and vocalist and has played at many different events and venues in the Lincoln area!
- True Colors Personality Quiz with Rhonda Saunders  
Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 10 a.m.  
Each of us has a different and unique personality; however, there are commonalities that we share! Rhonda Saunders with Amana Care will lead us through the True Colors quiz, a quick and fun personality assessment based on psychology research, to discover your personality style and how you can relate better with others!

## Washington Street Center

402-441-7157

- Echo and the Grateful Growers on the 2nd and 3rd Thursday of each month.  
In July the class will be Eco-printing on paper and fabric. This is a technique where plants, leaves and flowers leave their shape and color on fabric. In August, the class is Cyanotype prints or INKO dye-paper/fabric making prints from the sun. This is a 170-year-old process. In September and October, it will be natural dyed silk scarves. This might sound technical, but it is set up in a very fun and encouraging environment, plus there is plenty of assistance for you. These are free classes.

- Musical Entertainment  
Thursday, July 11, Aug. 8 and Sept. 12 – The Quarter Notes at 10 a.m.  
Wednesday, July 17 – Denise Howe at 10:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, July 24 – Dos Markos at 10:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, July 31, Aug. 28 and Sept. 25 – Patti, Bill and friends at 10 a.m.  
Wednesday, Aug. 14 – Music BINGO with Elliott Piper at 10:30 a.m.
- Priscilla the Comfort Dog visits the first Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m.

## Aging Partners Rural Foot Clinics

Appointments required, call 402-416-7693.

- Waverly – 9 to 11 a.m. Friday, July 5 and Sept. 6  
Waverly VFW, 13820 Guildford St.
- Malcolm – 9 to 11 a.m. Friday, July 19 and Sept. 20  
Malcolm Village Hall, 137 E. 2nd St.
- Bennet – 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Thursday, July 25 and Sept. 26  
American Legion Hall, 970 Monroe St.
- Firth – 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Monday, July 29 and Sept. 23  
Firth Community Center, 311 Nemaha St.
- Hickman – 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
July 31 and Sept. 18  
Hickman Community Center, 311 Locust St.

## Music BINGO with Elliott Piper

- Firth – Monday, July 1 at 12:15 p.m.  
Firth Community Center, 311 Nemaha St.
- Hickman – Wednesday, July 3 at 12:15 p.m.  
115 Locust St.  
Hickman Community Center
- Bennet – Thursday, July 11 at 12:15 p.m.  
970 Monroe St.  
Bennet American Legion

## Entertainment with Kenny Miller

- Bennet – Thursday, Aug. 1 at

10:30 a.m.

Bennet American Legion,  
970 Monroe St.

- Firth – Monday, Aug. 12 at 10:30 a.m.  
Firth Community Center,  
311 Nemaha St.
- Hickman – Wednesday, Aug. 14 at 10:30 a.m.  
Hickman Community Center,  
115 Locust St.

## Entertainment with Denise Howe

- Bennet – Thursday, Sept. 5 at 10:30 a.m.  
Bennet American Legion,  
970 Monroe St.
- Hickman – Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 10:30 a.m.  
Hickman Community Center,  
115 Locust St.
- Firth – Monday, Sept. 16 at 10:30 a.m.  
Firth Community Center,  
311 Nemaha St.

## 2024 Aging Partners Seasonal Events

### 2024 Dinner and Show

(co-sponsored by Butherus, Maser & Love, catered by Hy-Vee)

Auld Pavilion, 1650 Memorial Drive  
5:30 to 7 p.m. (doors open at 5 p.m.)

\$10 entertainment fee

\$5 round-trip transportation fee within Lincoln

Call 402-441-7158 for reservations

- Toasted Ponies  
Thursday, July 11  
Reservation and payment deadline:  
Wednesday, July 3

The Toasted Ponies are an award-winning bluegrass band featuring red-hot instrumentals and beautiful harmony vocals. Menu: Oven-roasted turkey w/gravy, stuffing, seasoned green beans, fresh fruit, brownie, milk, coffee.

- Nebraska Vocal Jazz Project (NVJP)  
Thursday, Aug. 8  
Reservation and payment deadline:  
Wednesday, July 31

Comprised of a composer, a marketer, a space lawyer, and two teachers, NVJP aims to bring vocal jazz to Nebraska in a new light and

explore the possibilities of a modern vocal jazz ensemble. Menu: Roast beef, broccoli, twice-baked potato, roll, raspberry cupcake, milk, coffee.

- Hillbilly Deluxe Band

Thursday, Sept. 12

Reservation and payment deadline:

Wednesday, Sept. 4

Singing and playing country music, blues, and old rock and roll. Menu: Chicken-fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, veggie, roll, apple crisp, milk, coffee.

## Support Groups

### Aging Partners Caregiver Support Group

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

8550 Pioneers Blvd., Room 137

(Enter through door 9 on south side of St. Mark's, turn left and go downstairs)

2nd Tuesday of every month

5 to 6 p.m.

Caregivers take care of family members and friends. But who takes care of the caregiver? Support groups provide hope, information, and a safe environment to share concerns. Aging Partners Caregiver Support Group is led by a Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner.

Eligible caregivers are:

- An individual of any age providing care for an older adult, age 60 and over
- Providing care for a person with Alzheimer's disease, brain injury or a related brain disorder
- Over the age of 55 and raising a grandchild. Registrations are not needed, walk-ins welcomed.

### Lincoln Parkinson's Disease Support Group

Sheridan Lutheran Church

6955 Old Cheney Road, Lincoln

4th Sunday of the month at 2 p.m.

Where understanding, encouragement, and camaraderie await for families, caregivers, and loved ones. Each month, we will share key information, tips, ideas, and best practices for Parkinson's patients and are partners.

Attendees will receive resources from the Parkinson's Foundation; "Living Better with Parkinson's."

- Free event
- Family and friends' welcome

For more information, visit LPDSG.org or call 402-780-1211.

### Lincoln Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

Charles H. Gere Branch Library

2400 S. 56th St., Meeting Room #2

Lincoln, NE 68506

2nd Thursday of the month


6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Build a support system with people who understand.

Alzheimer's Association Nebraska Chapter Support Groups are conducted by trained facilitators, are a safe place for people living with dementia and their care partners to:

- Develop a support system.
- Exchange practical information on challenges and possible solutions.
- Talk through issues and ways of coping.
- Share feelings, needs and concerns.
- Learn about community resources.

For questions, contact Karla Frese at 402-780-1211.

Visit [www.alz.org/nebraska](http://www.alz.org/nebraska) to learn more about caregiver programs and resources. To further extend your network of support, visit ALZ connected, our online community, at [alzconnected.org](http://alzconnected.org). 

# LivingWell

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\$12 \_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

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Lincoln, NE 68510-2451

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This magazine is for the 87,530 age 60 and over adults, their families and caregivers residing in Butler, Fillmore, Lancaster, Polk, Saline, Saunders, Seward and York counties in Nebraska.

Your contribution helps Aging Partners publish the area's premiere resource for those 60 and over. Join us in supporting healthy, full and independent living.

\_\_\_ Check or money order payable to *Living Well* enclosed.

*Sorry, we don't accept credit cards.*

Questions about subscribing? Contact Deb Elrod at [delrod@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:delrod@lincoln.ne.gov) or 402-441-6146.

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