



aging care
connections

Because Aging Well Matters

WINTER 2017

AGING WELL MATTERS

It's that Time of Year Again: Medicare Open Enrollment

Your mailbox is filled to the brim. Not with holiday cards, but with endless mailings from insurance companies. Medicare Open Enrollment season is here once again. With so many options for coverage, making sense of it all can feel like a burden. But at Aging Care Connections, we see Open Enrollment as a great opportunity for older adults to ensure they have the coverage they need. Below are a few simple tips to make the most out of Medicare Open Enrollment:

- **Read your mail** – If you are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, you should receive an “annual notice of change” or “evidence of benefits” letter from your insurer. This is not junk mail. Carefully read this document to learn about any changes to your plan in the coming year.
- **Call your doctors and your pharmacist** – If you are enrolling in a Medicare Advantage plan, call your doctors and hospitals to ensure they are part of your plan’s network. Find out if your pharmacy is part of the network, and if it is your plan’s preferred pharmacy.
- **Take advantage of community resources** – There are many programs and resources available to help older adults in our community make

sense out of Medicare options. Contact Aging Care Connections’ Information and Assistance office at 708-354-1323, to learn more.

As the New Year approaches, resolve to take charge of your health and healthcare coverage in 2018!

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Our Mission

Our mission is to enrich the quality of life in our community by providing older adults and their families with guidance and support that enhances the ability to age well. We do this by providing comprehensive programs and services for older adults and their families. Below is a list of some of our programs and services:

- Adult Protective Services
- Aging Well Neighborhood
- Benefits Assistance
- Caregiver Support
- Comprehensive Care Coordination
- Congregate Meals
- Home Delivered Meals
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- Information & Assistance
- Transitional Care

Aging Care Connections

Phone: 708-354-1323

Email: info@agingcareconnections.org

Website: www.agingcareconnections.org

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www.facebook.com/agingcareconnections



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Statement of Non-Discrimination

Aging Care Connections does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment or employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department on Aging.

Welcome our New Director of Social Services: Aileen Kokaska, MSW, LCSW



We are thrilled to welcome Aileen Kokaska as our new Director of Social Services. With an extensive background in quality assurance and case management, Aileen has hit the ground running, directing our wide range of programs and services.

After earning a BSW from George Williams College (later completing her MSW at Loyola), Aileen launched her career as a care coordinator at PLOWS Council on Aging. She supervised the agency's Elder Abuse program, and in 1999 was selected by the Illinois Department on Aging

to be the first Elder Abuse Caseworker of the Year. She then went on to serve for nine years as Quality Assurance Supervisor for CEDA, where she was responsible for training and development. At CEDA she established best practice standards and continuous quality improvement.

Aileen comes to us from her most recent position at Humana at Home. In this key role, she ensured that clients with complex healthcare issues were being given appropriate and timely care to meet their needs. When asked why she joined Aging Care Connections, Aileen said she is excited to once again be part of a nonprofit that serves older adults in our local community. She added, "At Aging Care Connections, I hope to affect change and help older adults age where they want to—in their homes and communities."



Celebrating 40 Years with Aging Care Connections

On September 17th, Executive Director Debra Vershelde celebrated forty years of service with Aging Care Connections. Debbie began her career as the Volunteer Coordinator and then moved into the Social Service Department working in the community with older adults in their homes. She served as the organization's Social Service Director for 14 years until she was appointed Executive Director in April 1999. Please join us in congratulating Debbie on this milestone!

events

Sports Ball Sets Fundraising Milestone

On September 15, 2017, community members, local personalities, and celebrity athletes, donned in their finest sports attire, arrived at the Marriott in Burr Ridge to rally in support of older adults in our community. The sports themed gala raised over \$104,000 through tickets, sponsorships, donations, raffle tickets, and live, program, and silent auctions—making it our most profitable event to date and the first time we have raised over \$100,000 through this Gala.

Sports Ball was hosted by Dionne Miller, ABC 7 Sports Anchor and Reporter, who also led an engaging and memorable Q&A with celebrity athletes Desmond Clark (Chicago Bears 2003-2010), Adrian Peterson (Chicago Bears 2002-2009), and Julie Harshbarger (Chicago Force and Rockton Rush). Thank you again to our Most Valuable Premier Sponsor, the Community Bank of Western Springs.



A WINTRUST COMMUNITY BANK



Volunteer Spotlight: Ruth Berberich



Although Ruth has only been volunteering with Aging Care Connections since June, she has had a tremendous impact on the agency. Tuesdays and Thursdays she is busy filing and sending out mailings and on Mondays and Wednesdays she is helping the Benefits Assistance program schedule appointments for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. She has become a key member of our volunteer team.

Ruth said she was drawn to volunteer at Aging Care Connections because of her life-long commitment to helping older adults. She was so excited to continue that passion through her volunteer efforts. And we are excited to have her!

Caregiver Corner: Memory Café

What in the world is a Memory Café? The first Memory Café was launched in Holland in 1997 by a psychologist who wanted to reduce the isolation experienced by people with dementia and their caregivers. Cafés quickly spread across Europe, then to Australia and Canada, and can now be found throughout the United States. Exciting news: Aging Care Connections is collaborating with Young at Heart Adult Day Center and other community resources to bring one to our area!

Memory Cafés provide a respite from the challenges associated with memory loss. They are an opportunity for care partners to take a break and have fun together in a relaxed atmosphere. Planned activities may include art, music, and movement. Everyone is welcome and invited to participate at their own level of comfort. There is also plenty of time to socialize and meet new people, with no explanations needed.

Memory Cafés will be hosted once a month and are free of charge. More details are coming soon. If you are interested in being added to our contact list, as a participant OR a volunteer, please email Mackenzie Buss at student2@agingcareconnections.org or leave her a voicemail at (708) 603-2266. Donations of snacks and beverages from local businesses would also be greatly appreciated.

support

Foundation Spotlight:



We are pleased to share that we were recently awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Healthy Communities Foundation to support our greatest needs. General operating grants like this are a key part of our ability to strengthen our work, fill funding gaps, and adapt to the changing needs of our community.

HFC is a community informed grant making foundation that seeks to measurably improve the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities in our service area by promoting health equity, quality, and access for all. Foundation president, Maria S. Pesqueira, shared, “Aging Care Connections plays a vital role in serving the needs of elders and people with disabilities in our communities. I have witnessed firsthand the important role of the organization in developing the Aging Well Neighborhood Collaborative. This spirit of collaboration goes a long way towards creating an environment that supports the health and well-being of our community.”

Leave a Lasting Legacy

Have you considered leaving a meaningful legacy for older adults by making a bequest to Aging Care Connections? When establishing or reviewing your will with your attorney, we hope you will consider Aging Care Connections as part of your charitable giving. Your gift will help us help thousands of older adults today and in the future. It's as simple as asking your attorney to include language in your will or trust as follows: “I bequeath the sum of \$(enter the amount or percentage) of my estate to Aging Care Connections, La Grange, Illinois, to be used for the general support of the organization or as its Board of Directors deems appropriate.”

For additional information, please contact Nancy Grah, Director of Philanthropy and External Affairs at 708-603-2243.

Partner Highlight: Helping Hand Center

Helping Hand Center is a nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with disabilities. Based in Countryside, it provides educational, therapeutic, residential, and employment opportunities to people throughout Chicagoland.

This year, we strengthened our partnership with Helping

Hand, when their clients began volunteering at our Congregate Meals program. Every week, eight volunteers prepare and serve meals to older adults. Through this opportunity, adults with disabilities gain work experience and employment skills they can use in the future.

The volunteers are popular among participants who count on the program for freshly prepared, nutritious meals. “Helping Hand volunteers are true to their name,” says Marie Johnson, a Congregate Meals regular, “they are compassionate, helpful, and respectful. They give so much with their helping hands.”

Volunteer Opportunities

AARP Tax-Aide Volunteers for 2018 Filing Season

The AARP Tax-Aide Program is seeking volunteers for the upcoming 2018 filing season. You do not need to be an AARP member nor have an accounting background to volunteer. However, some knowledge of your own personal tax matters is very helpful. All returns are prepared on computers, thus volunteers should be somewhat computer literate. Training classes will be held in January, 2018. This income tax preparation and assistance is offered to low and middle income individuals with special attention to those 60 years and older. **To volunteer as an AARP Tax-Aide, visit www.aarp.org/taxvolunteer.**

Office Volunteers

Aging Care Connections is seeking volunteers to help with reception and filing. Filing volunteers should be organized and able to bend and lift file boxes. Reception volunteers should enjoy answering phones and helping to schedule appointments. We are looking for individuals who are very reliable and able to commit to a weekly schedule.

To volunteer, contact Denise Gerda at 708-603-2245 or dgerda@agingcareconnections.org.

Community Outreach Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to help spread the word about our Aging Well Neighborhood program. If you are interested in helping others learn about valuable services, and would enjoy meeting with community groups, churches, or schools to share information or flyers about the Aging Well Neighborhood program, we are looking for you.

In-Kind Donations Make a Difference during the Holidays

The holidays should be filled with joy, but for some older adults it can be the loneliest time of the year. Help Aging Care Connections brighten the lives of older adults in need, by donating any of the following items:

- Grocery store gift cards to purchase holiday meals
- Baskets with non-perishable holiday foods
- Large print puzzle books
- Throw blankets or massage pillows (new)
- Winter hats, mittens, or scarves

To drop off a donation, contact Nancy Grah at 708-603-2243.

Silver Linings: Marie Johnson



“Be true to yourself and live and let live”



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Because Aging Well Matters

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events

Mark your calendars!

Walk for Health

Third Wednesday of the month
10:30 am – 12:00 pm
La Grange Recreation Center
536 East Ave, La Grange, IL

Friday Morning Regulars (Men's group)

Every Friday
8:30 am - 10:00 am
St. Barbara's Parish Center
4008 Prairie Ave, Brookfield, IL
For info call 708-354-1232, Ext 215

Congregate Meals - Christmas Auction

Friday, December 1 at 12:30 pm
Salerno's Pizzeria & Sports Bar
9301 W. 63rd St, Hodgkins, IL
To register, call 708-354-1323

Congregate Meals - Christmas Lunch and raffle

Thursday, December 21 at 10:30 am
Salerno's Pizzeria & Sports Bar
9301 W. 63rd St, Hodgkins, IL
To register, call 708-354-1323

Congregate Meals - New Year's Eve Party

Friday, December 29 at 10:30 am
Salerno's Pizzeria & Sports Bar
9301 W. 63rd St, Hodgkins, IL
To register, call 708-354-1323

Caregiving 101

Thursday, February 8 at 6:30 pm
Bellwood Public Library
600 Bohland Ave, Bellwood, IL
To register, call 708-547-7393 and
select option 4

Congregate Meals - Mardi Gras/Fat Tuesday Celebration

Tuesday, February 13 at 10:30 am
Salerno's Pizzeria & Sports Bar
9301 W. 63rd St, Hodgkins, IL
To register, call 708-354-1323

Congregate Meals - Valentine's Day Party

Wednesday, February 14 at 10:30 am
Salerno's Pizzeria & Sports Bar
9301 W. 63rd St, Hodgkins, IL
To register, call 708-354-1323

SAVE THE DATE! Aging Well Month

May 2018
Free programs and activities
throughout the month

Help us go green! If you prefer a digital version of the newsletter, please email ngrah@agingcareconnections.org.