



AGELESS TIMES

**February
March
2021**

**Dates to
Remember**

 **Sunday
February 14**
Valentine's Day

**Monday
February 15**
Presidents' Day
**COEDD Closed*

**Sunday
March 14**
**Daylight Saving
Time**

**Wednesday
March 17**
St. Patrick's Day

**Saturday
March 20**
Spring Begins

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New COEDD AAA Director Takes the Reins

Jonathan Mitchell began his duties as Director in August 2020. He first became involved with COEDD AAA when he went to work for Project HEART in 2015 in the Outreach Program. That same year, the Outreach Program moved to COEDD AAA under a direct service waiver and he was appointed to the position of Outreach Manager.

Mitchell has a sincere desire to assist older adults in our area, and when COEDD AAA Director John Shea announced his retirement in July, Mitchell applied for the position. He was selected by a committee consisting of COEDD and Oklahoma Aging Services Division staff.

"Jonathan's caring spirit and knowledge of the programs, along with his vision for the future, is what moved me to vote for his selection," said COEDD Executive Director David Hinkle. "I look forward to the privilege of working with him and his staff to serve the interests and needs of Central Oklahoma's seniors," he added.

Now...a little about Jonathan. He married his wife Jacque 43 years ago after being introduced by her brother whom he was serving with in the U.S. Army at Ft. Riley, Kansas. He and Jacque moved to Northern California, where Mitchell was raised. A short time later they relocated to Arizona where Jonathan began a career in Law Enforcement, first in Arizona, then Texas. He served as a city police officer, a deputy sheriff and moved up the ranks quickly. He earned many commendations and awards in the military and in law enforcement.

He and Jacque have three children: Curtis, William, and Aundrea. And they have four grandchildren that have graced their lives. The Mitchell family moved to Oklahoma in 1993 and began working in the ministry. In 1997 they founded a church in Stroud called Higher Praise Outreach, which is doing well today.

Mitchell is excited to take on the challenge of running COEDD AAA, and speaks of his admiration for the previous director's years of leadership. "I just want this great team at COEDD to continue onward with their devotion to assisting the aging citizens of our area, even when the funds are low," said Mitchell. "John Shea was a role model of going above and beyond, networking, and encouraging others to assist with whatever means may be generated," Mitchell continued.

He states that COEDD AAA has dealt with a lot of trying changes recently including Shea's retirement and our long time Planner Donna Keyes passing away suddenly. "We are working together to keep COEDD on track," said Mitchell. He said Shea has helped on several occasions since his retirement. "In this time of transition, in comes COVID-19 and shakes things up even more," he said. "We are hoping, as are so many others, that someday we will return to some type of normal."

Mitchell urges people to reach out to COEDD AAA for help. "We are here to assist and encourage you as you age in place. We would love to meet you and form an ongoing friendship," he concluded.





COEDD AAA Staff Updates

Along with a brand new Director, COEDD AAA has gone through a lot of changes in the last year or so. In fact, many of us are new to the agency within the last year. So allow us to take a moment and introduce our new staff members that have become part of the team.

For more information on any of our programs mentioned below, please call COEDD AAA at 1-800-375-8255 or 405-273-6410, Press 2 for Aging Services.

We are happy to have both our Long Term Care Ombudsman Supervisor positions filled after two of our employees went to positions in the State Ombudsman Office. An Ombudsman advocates for residents' rights in long term care facilities and works to resolve issues/complaints. It has been a difficult situation for these two as their visits to facilities have been limited due to COVID-19, but they are reaching out by phone as much as possible.

Denise Luzmoor began as an Ombudsman in October. Prior to that, she has served as Executive Assistant at an Adult Day Program. She has also held Administrative/Human Resources positions in areas ranging from agencies that assisted individuals with disabilities to oil field trucking companies.

She has an Associate of Arts Degree in Psychology. Her hobbies include hiking, fishing, creative writing, and keeping up her sign language skills. She is a recent transplant to the state from Colorado along with her son.



"I look forward to being in a socially rewarding position that makes a difference, even if a small one, in the lives of those who may need a little help having their voice heard," said Luzmoor.



Cherry Love joined the team in December as an Ombudsman, but she is no stranger to COEDD AAA. She worked for Project HEART for 17 years as the Stroud Nutrition Site Manager. She has taken some college and a lot of Vo-Tech classes.

"I am still in training, but love to help our elderly. I loved assisting my seniors at the Stroud Site, and so far I really enjoy those I am working with and can't wait until I can start visiting with our facilities," said Love. "God tells us to take care of the children and elderly and I pray that I can do just that," she said.

Love enjoys reading and gardening flowers and vegetables, and she loves her church.

(COEDD AAA Staff Updates continued on Page 3)



Debra Case came on board as the new Caregiver Coordinator in July of 2020. She has 15 years experience as the Caregiver Coordinator for a local home health agency and she has served as a private caregiver for several people for over 10 years.

She oversees the Respite Voucher Program at COEDD, a state and federally funded program for unpaid family caregivers who need a break once in a while. The program provides the caregivers with vouchers that they can use to hire someone to give them a break.

“My goal for this position is to spread the word all over our service area that there is help and support for fulltime caregivers,” said Case.

She was born and raised in Shawnee and is married with children and grandchildren.

Next up is Planner **Glenna Jones**, who has been here the longest of the new group, joining the agency in December 2019. The Planner is responsible for much of COEDD AAA’s operations and reporting, including writing the Area Plan, which is the agency’s funding document and contract with OKDHS State Aging Services. The Planner also monitors COEDD’s Title III funded projects.



Glenna comes with a wealth of knowledge in the field of reporting and grant writing. She previously served as the Administrative Assistant to Ex-Governor Edwina Butler-Wolfe of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe. Jones has a Master’s Degree in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma and has been involved in Grant Peer Review for the Federal Government for several years.

She was born and raised in Oklahoma, married her childhood sweetheart Mel Jones and they had 3 children.

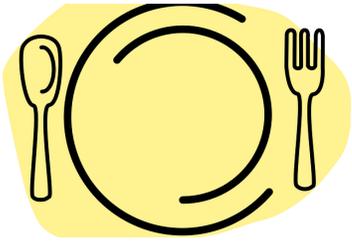
And finally, **Richard Ortle** is not new to COEDD AAA, or even new in the Outreach Program, but he is new to his position as the Director of that program. He filled the spot when Jonathan Mitchell moved to the AAA Director position. Outreach Specialists conduct in-home assessments to try and find resources for older adults to help them maintain their independence.



Prior to being promoted, he worked for 3 years as an Outreach Specialist and Housing Manager. Previously, he served as Director of New Age Project, a Nutrition program that serves older adults in three counties in the COEDD AAA service area. “I’m blessed to work with and help our aging adults,” said Ortle.

Richard has a history of helping seniors in need. He is active in his church and helps seniors there with projects such as mowing yards and home repairs.

Meal Programs Are Still Here For Older Adults During the Pandemic



We like to remind people regularly that there are Older Americans Act meal programs available in the community for older adults throughout our service area. And with the COVID-19 Pandemic affecting everyone and causing difficulty accessing food, it is more important than ever to tell people about this vital service. They are still here and working hard to make this service available to older adults in these trying times.

Monday through Friday each week, over 2,000 participants at Title III nutrition sites in the COEDD Area Agency on Aging seven county area enjoy well balanced lunches. During the pandemic, people are not able to gather and eat at the sites due to safety concerns. Instead, meals are packaged and distributed conveniently through curbside delivery—just come by the site and pick it up. Once it is determined to be safer for everyone, then gathering and eating in the sites will hopefully be available again.

And as always, for those people who are identified through an assessment as homebound, nutritious lunches are delivered weekdays by friendly volunteers or staff to the person's home. Volunteers are always needed for this vital service, especially in rural areas. There are two nutrition projects that handle the Title III Meal Program in the COEDD AAA area: Project HEART and New Age Nutrition Project. Thanks to both of these Projects and all the Site Managers and Staff who have worked tirelessly to make the continuation of these services possible for older adults in the time of COVID-19.

In addition to the Title III nutrition sites, there are independent senior centers in the COEDD service area. Many of these centers offer meals through donations and funding received through the CENA program. There are also a few private agencies in our area that run homebound meal programs.

To find out if there is a nutrition program near you and to sign up, contact COEDD Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-375-8255 Ext. 128, or 405-273-6410 Ext. 128.

COVID-19 VACCINE IN OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma State Department of Health Vaccine Scheduler Portal available:

<https://vaccinate.oklahoma.gov/> (You can call 2-1-1 if you do not have access to the internet)

The Vaccine Scheduler Portal is available to allow eligible Oklahomans to schedule their COVID-19 vaccination. The registration portal will serve as a tool to help eligible Oklahomans find more information on when and where to receive the vaccine. Registering information online will not reserve individuals a spot on any kind of list.

*Reminder: Appointment availability is solely dependent upon vaccine supply. Additionally, please be patient with the scheduler portal as they work to ensure all available appointments are properly added throughout upcoming days and address technical issues.

Please note: you must register at vaccinate.oklahoma.gov to receive email notifications regarding vaccine appointment availability. Remember, only Phase 1 and some Phase 2 priority groups including Oklahomans who are 65 years of age or older, as well as healthcare workers and first responders will be able to schedule appointments in the system at this point. As our state advances in our phased approach to vaccine distribution, the system will allow for individuals in additional priority groups and phases the opportunity to schedule their appointment once eligible. (*If you have questions, please call COEDD AAA for more info)

*The following message was forwarded to us by the Oklahoma Insurance Department, so we wanted to pass it along. Be aware of potential scammers. Call COEDD AAA at 1-800-375-8255 or 405-273-6410 Ext. 128 if you have any questions or concerns.

Watch out for COVID-19 vaccine scams

As the country begins to distribute COVID-19 vaccines, there's no doubt scammers are already scheming.

Medicare covers the COVID-19 vaccine, so there will be no cost to you. If anyone asks you to share your Medicare Number or pay for access to the vaccine, you can bet it's a scam.

Here's what to know:

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.

Don't share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

If you come across a COVID-19 vaccine scam, **report it to the Federal Trade Commission** or call us at 1-800-MEDICARE. And check out **CDC.gov** for trustworthy information on the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,
The Medicare Team

This message is paid for by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It was created and distributed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Quick Tips for Living Well

Get Fitter in 9 Minutes a Day

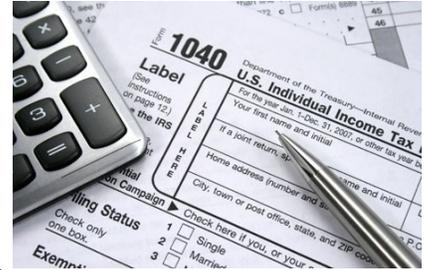
People with pain in their hips, knees, ankles, or feet who logged 60 minutes of moderate to brisk exercise per week were 86 percent less likely to develop a mobility disability such as walking too slowly to cross streets safely, according to a four-year study. They were also 45 percent less apt to end up with a daily-living disability, such as having trouble bathing or dressing, than those who exercised less.

Source: Consumer Reports



CHECK THE BOX TO HELP OLDER OKLAHOMANS!

YOU CAN DONATE TAX REFUND TO OSHL



Did you know that the Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature (OSHL) improves the lives of Older Oklahomans by writing, advocating for, and passing State legislation? OSHL has selected 5 bills to propose to the State Legislature for the 2021 Legislative Session: (1) Provide for a sales tax exemption on groceries for those who are 60 years of age and older, (2) Provide for an income tax credit for those who care for Older Oklahomans in their homes and are 62 years of age and older, (3) Provide for a sales tax exemption on prescribed hearing devices, (4) Require long-term care facilities to have backup generator options when electrical outages occur, and (5) Direct the State Legislature to fill a vacancy in the Oklahoma Congressional delegation should a vacancy occur rather than filling the vacancy in the subsequent general election.

In the past, the Silver Haired Legislature passed a bill which created the Silver Alert. They also passed a bill resulting in the completion of required training before certified nurse aides can care for patients. And OSHL is responsible for allowing video cameras in the rooms of nursing home residents if residents request and provide the placement of the cameras.

100 Oklahomans turn 65 every day. The primary state organization which provides services to many of these vulnerable older Oklahomans are the Area Agencies on Aging. The Silver Haired Legislature remains committed to advocating for restored funding to the Area Agencies on Aging to protect the continuation of all needed services to Older Oklahomans.

The Silver Haired Legislature needs your help so that the organization continues to write, advocate for, and pass legislation which addresses the growing issues that Older Oklahomans face. Here's how you can help:

This Spring, when you complete your Oklahoma State Personal Income Tax form, please designate the OSHL as a recipient of a portion of your State Income Tax Refund that you file. The Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature is one of the eligible organizations that is printed on the Oklahoma Income Tax form to receive a designated contribution amount. If you check the OSHL organization, the contribution amount that you designate will be provided to the Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature. You will help our advocacy efforts to continue.

The Silver Haired Legislature is made-up of Oklahomans 60 years of age and older who live across the state. Members talk to older Oklahomans to learn about their issues, research those issues, and write model bills for the Oklahoma State Legislature to consider during the Oklahoma State Legislative Sessions that begin each February. Because OSHL members frequently communicate with State Legislators, the Legislators are familiar with members of the organization. If you would like membership information, please contact President Trish Emig at 405-743-4623.

Please help us continue supporting Older Oklahomans. Please make a contribution when you complete your Oklahoma Personal Income Tax form this Spring. Thank you!



NEED RESOURCES? INFORMATION? COEDD AAA INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST IS READY TO HELP

The Information and Assistance Specialist (I&A) links older persons, their families, caregivers, professionals, and the general public to agencies and programs that provide a wide variety of services to older Oklahomans that includes:

- Caregiver Services
- Case Management
- Education and Employment
- Elder Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation
- Financial Assistance
- Home Care Services
- Home Repairs/Modifications
- Housing Options for Seniors
- Long-Term Care Options
- Medicaid (Advantage Program)
- Medicare Assistance
- Mental Health/Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services
- Native American Information
- Senior Center Programs
- Support Groups
- Transportation
- Volunteer Opportunities

The Information and Assistance Specialist will assess the needs of the individual calling for help and link the caller to appropriate services. Information & Assistance services are free of charge and are for seniors of all walks of life. Many programs and services have no income guidelines.



“I receive calls about every topic you can think of,” says COEDD AAA I&A Specialist Kristi Tischer. (pictured at right) “And that’s what I’m here for. . . . I encourage anyone to call me if they have a problem or need and we can have a conversation and see if there are resources that might help their situation,” she continued. “I always say, I may not have an answer every time, but I will let you know what I know and try to give you helpful information.”

For answers and solutions to issues on aging, call COEDD Information and Assistance Specialist Kristi Tischer at 405-273-6410 Ext. 128 or toll free at 1-800-375-8255 Ext. 128. You can also call the Senior Information Line at 1-800-211-2116 from anywhere in the state and be connected to the agency in your area. The COEDD AAA I&A answers those calls in our area.

COEDD Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
Serving Hughes, Lincoln, Pawnee, Payne,
Pottawatomie, Okfuskee, and Seminole Counties

400 N. Bell St.
Shawnee, OK 74801

Phone: 405-273-6410
Fax: 405-273-3213
Toll-Free: 1-800-375-TALK (8255)
Senior Info-Line: 1-800-211-2116

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Director	<i>Jonathan Mitchell</i>
Planner	<i>Glenna Jones</i>
I & A Specialist	<i>Kristi Tischer</i>
Caregiver Coordinator	<i>Debra Case</i>
Outreach Manager	<i>Richard Ortle</i>
Outreach Specialist	<i>Jean Ann Elliott</i>
Ombudsman Supervisor	<i>Cherry Love</i>
Ombudsman Supervisor	<i>Denise Luzmoor</i>
Bookkeeper	<i>Floy Alexander</i>

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THANK YOU MASONIC CHARITY FOUNDATION!

The Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma awarded the Oklahoma Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) once again with funding for the Masonic Assistance Program for Seniors. For the calendar year 2021, they awarded \$760,637 statewide, with COEDD AAA receiving an allocation of \$68,422 for distribution in the seven counties they serve.

The Masonic Foundation first awarded this grant in 2007 and have continued each year since. The partnership is truly a blessing and has helped many people. The Masonic grant allows the AAA's to provide direct assistance to older adults who are in need of financial help to address health and safety threats that are outside what state and federal funding allows.

“Without this program, there would be many people who would fall through the cracks and not get the crucial help they need,” said COEDD AAA Information and Assistance Specialist Kristi Tischer. “I answer the phones and try to help older adults find needed resources, and there would be a lot of people with nowhere to turn for help without this vital program,” she continued.



The Masonic Assistance Program for Seniors assists adults 55 years of age and older with health and safety threats. The program will continue to help older adults to remain in their own homes and communities. The application process is simple and applicants don't have to wait months for a decision. In most cases an individual will hear about their application status within a couple of weeks.

The program can help with a variety of urgent health and safety needs including but not limited to: building wheelchair ramps, handicap accessibility, minor home repairs, eyeglasses and dental issues. If you or someone you know might benefit from the program, please contact COEDD AAA at 1-800-375-8255 Ext.128.

Thank you to the Masonic Charity Foundation for helping older adults in Oklahoma.

