



GOLDEN YEARS

April, May, June 2026



hello,
Spring



East Central Kansas
Area Agency on Aging

Serving - Anderson - Coffey - Franklin - Linn - Miami - Osage

117 S. Main St.
Ottawa, Kansas
785.242.7200

Greetings

In January of 2026 my walking partner and I took a hike on a very cold day as the first hike of our 36th year of walking together. We have walked 4-5 times a week year-round and for the last 30 years have always started at 5:30 a.m. There is usually nothing on our schedules at that time of day to keep us from going! During this time, we have solved a lot of problems, talked through world events, dealt with medical issues, watched our families change and bought a lot of walking shoes!

The key to any benefit of wellness is consistency and finding a good and reliable person or group to keep you consistent. She knows I am waiting for her, and I know she is waiting for me. We hold each other accountable, and we make it easier to hit the floor every morning at 5:00 a.m.

We hope this issue provides you information on how you can find the parts of wellness that help you be your best self!



*Leslea, Director,
ECKAAA*

As of January, I am starting my fourth year of being employed at ECKAAA, working on a part-time basis. It has provided me with a sense of well-being. It helps keep my mind sharp and increases my feelings of self-esteem. Working has increased my creative abilities. I enjoy all of the projects I do here, such as working on Golden Years, intergenerational activities, nutrition surveys & packing food boxes, organizing Lunch n' Learns, and so much more. It has helped my mental health by being engaged with the community & the people I work with (who are all wonderful).

Deb Henningsen,

Community Programs Coordinator

I feel like spring is really when the new year starts. After weeks of clouds, the return of color to nature brings me back to life. Outside is where I want to be - tinkering with the chicken coop, attempting to get something (anything!) that I plant to grow, wandering about with the kids & dogs, and imagining all the possibilities of the future (which will definitely include baby goats!). In this issue, you'll explore the components of mental health. For me, caring for plants and animals touches every one of them—connecting me to nature, nurturing my spirit and emotions, keeping my body and mind active, and reminding me that the most meaningful things in life are often the simplest. I hope you are inspired to nourish your body, mind, and soul.

Brandi, Marketing & Outreach



May is Mental Health Awareness Month



What is Mental Health Awareness Month?

Mental Health Awareness Month has been an annual observance since 1949. It was founded by Mental Health America to bring awareness to mental wellbeing, educate the public, reduce stigma and promote support for those affected by mental health conditions.

Why is Mental Health Awareness Important?

Mental Health Awareness Month helps people recognize the ways mental illness impacts their lives and the lives of others. Recognition and education are important ways to remove the stigma associated with mental illness. Talking openly about mental health can reduce the misconceptions and encourage those who are suffering to seek help and support.

It's important to understand that mental wellbeing is multi-dimensional. Of the eight components, we will focus on five. Remember, each dimension is intertwined with the others. Neglecting one often leads to problems in others, while **improving one can create a positive ripple effect** throughout your overall health.

Emotional Wellness: Coping effectively with life's stressors and maintaining satisfying relationships.

Intellectual Wellness: Recognizing your creative abilities and finding ways to expand your knowledge and skills.

Physical Wellness: Caring for your body through regular physical activity, nutrition and adequate sleep.

Financial Wellness: Feeling satisfied with your current and future financial situations.

Social Wellness: Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a reliable support system.

THE IMPACT OF ELIZABETH LAYTON



Elizabeth Layton, a native of Wellsville, Kansas began drawing in 1977 at the age of sixty-eight when she took a drawing class at a local university. In class she learned to use the technique of “blind” contour drawing in which the artist looks at the paper only for points of reference, concentrating on the subject reflected in the mirror rather than the line being drawn on the paper. Elizabeth suffered from bouts of depression for much of her life, which caused her to identify with those tormented by the pressures of modern society. Her work dispels the myths and misconceptions of old age. She was struggling with bi-polar illness and profound depression when she began contour drawing, and art became more than therapy for her – it saved her life. Her drawings and writings have enriched the lives of countless others and have been exhibited at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American Art, and more than two hundred art museums and centers throughout the U.S.



A copy of this Elizabeth Layton drawing (left) hangs in the ECKAAA conference room.

Elizabeth Layton Center’s mission is to provide comprehensive and integrated behavioral health services for communities in Franklin & Miami counties.

Address: 2537 Eisenhower Rd. Ottawa, KS

785.242.3780

Your Emotional Wellness

Emotional wellness is the ability to understand, express, and manage your emotions in healthy ways. Mindfulness & meditation practices can help increase emotional wellness by syncing the body and the mind. With regular mindfulness practice you may notice decreased stress, anxiety and pain, improved focus, memory, mood, and resilience, increased body awareness, and a stronger connection to the things really that matter - gratitude, presence, and closeness with others.

Breath-focused practices: Pay attention to your breathing without changing it. This can be done in any sitting, lying, or standing position. Even a few slow breaths can help the mind settle and ease stress.

Body awareness techniques: Try a body scan - in a lying or sitting position, close your eyes and focus on your toes and feet. Slowly move up the body to your ankles, lower legs, knees, upper legs, hips, torso, fingers and hands, back, neck, head, and each feature on your face.

Loving-kindness meditation: This is a short, caring phrase that you repeat quietly to yourself. A simple option is “may I be happy, may I be healthy, may I live with ease. Adjust these words to better suit your individuality or situation. You can try integrating some slow, deep breaths as you repeat the phrase.

Sensory grounding: You can bring your attention back to the present moment by focusing on each of your senses. Name one thing that you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel.

Light mindful movement: Mindful movement can include anything that brings your attention to your body without straining either one- chair exercises or yoga, simple stretches, walking, or any movement that you enjoy.

Try starting a gratitude journal to focus on the positive aspects of your life - all you need is a notebook:

3 things I'm thankful for: _____

2 things I'm looking forward to: _____

1 thing I'd like to improve, make progress on, or complete: _____

Your Intellectual Wellness

The National Institute on Aging defines cognitive health as the “ability to think, learn, and remember clearly.” There are endless activities to keep your brain active, some popular options include BINGO, card games, puzzles (physical, number, and word), crosswords, & word searches. See the resource pages for ways to keep not only your brain active, but your body & social life as well!

Try finding the 5 components of mental health! (emotional, physical, intellectual, financial, social)



Websites with FREE brain games!

- gamesforthebrain.com
- aarp.org/games
- mindgames.com
- britannica.com/quiz/browse
- cardgames.io
- games.sixtyandme.com

Your Physical Wellness

As people age, maintaining both physical and mental well-being becomes increasingly important. The benefits of regular physical activity extend far beyond the body. Engaging in exercise can significantly enhance mental health in general by reducing feelings of isolation and improving quality of life.

**National Walking Day is
April 2nd!**



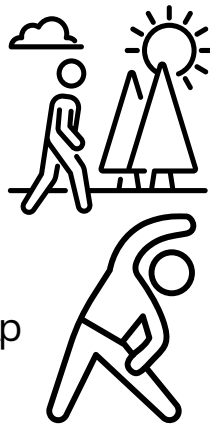
Added Health Benefits of **WALKING IN NATURE**

- ♥ Increasing attention, reasoning, and memory
- ♥ Reducing stress and anxiety
- ♥ Improving sleep quality
- ♥ Increasing emotional stability
- ♥ Increasing positive feelings about quality of life



Tips to Stay Active

- Try low-impact exercises such as gentle yoga, swimming, or walking.
- Consider group activities - look for local senior centers or community groups offering exercise classes or walking clubs.
- Be consistent - set a schedule to help you stay committed & connected.



Effects of exercise on mental health:

- release of endorphins, the body's natural "feel-good" chemicals.
- reduce stress, lift mood, and boost cognitive function.
- improve memory and delay the onset of age-related cognitive decline.
- prevent social isolation - exercising with friends in the community or joining a fitness group promotes social well-being.

May is National Arthritis Awareness Month

Arthritis is a condition that causes inflammation in the joints. Osteoarthritis is the most common and typically occurs in old age as the body naturally breaks down cartilage between the joints. This break down causes bone to rub together, causing pain, swelling, and loss of motion of the joint. Over time, these changes can affect the bones, tendons, and other joint tissues. However, you can help prevent and manage arthritis by exercising regularly, eating clean & maintaining a health weight. Low-impact exercises such as yoga and water aerobics are the best options to prevent further joint degeneration.

TOP FOODS THAT HELP REDUCE JOINT PAIN



How to Measure Your Blood Pressure at Home

♥ Before Taking Your Blood Pressure:

- Don't smoke, drink caffeine, or exercise for 30 minutes before measuring.
- Empty Your Bladder
- Sit calmly & quietly in a chair for 5 minutes



♥ Proper Body Positioning:

- Sit in a chair with your back supported & feet flat on the floor (legs uncrossed).
- Rest your arm on a table or armrest so the cuff is at **heart level**.
- Wrap the cuff around your bare arm, about an inch above the bend of your elbow.



♥ While Taking Your Blood Pressure:

- Remain in a still, relaxed, supported position (no talking)
- Take two or three readings a few minutes apart, record all results to share with your doctor.



systolic (top number, heart contracts)	and/or	diastolic (bottom number, heart resting)	category
less than 120	and	less than 80	normal
120-129	and	less than 80	elevated
130-139	or	80-89	high (stage 1 hypertension)
140+	or	90+	high (stage 2 hypertension)
180+	and/or	120+	SEVERE! NOTIFY your health care provider (w/o symptoms). EMERGENCY! IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS - call 911!



Symptoms include: chest or back pain, shortness of breath, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking.

Your Financial Wellness



Financial Wellness

- you can meet current financial obligations
- you feel secure about your financial future
- can use your money for enjoyment

Financial Stress

- feel guilty about spending money for enjoyment
- you are constantly worried or having difficulty sleeping due to financial concerns
- you avoid opening bills or bank statements

3 in 4

Say their mental health is being harmed by worries about housing, debt, healthcare bills, or retirement.

Anxiety about finances is very common, however, persistent financial worry can negatively impact every component of your mental health.

AMFM Healthcare surveyed 725 adults across the United States in May 2025.

87%

Nearly 9 in 10 Americans feel anxious about money, and the majority say that anxiety is getting worse as the year unfolds.

SLEEP



77% report economic stress has disrupted their rest in the past year.

If you are losing sleep over money concerns, please visit one of these resources:

- Mental Health America: mhanational.org/finance
- Crisistextline.org: Get Help → Financial Stress
- HelpGuide.org: Mental Health → Stress

Your Social Wellness

At the heart of social wellness is having good relationships with friends and family, and feeling connected to your community. These connections enhance one's sense of wellbeing and provides a support network, in turn, reducing stress which has a multitude of benefits including recovering from illness more quickly and contributing to a longer life.

Ways you can stay **SOCIAL**:

Silver Sneakers - attend a local exercise class (or visit tools.silversneakers.com).

Organized Outings - visit a local historical site, art gallery, or park with friends.

Card games - play a card game with a neighbor, friend, or group - check with your local library or senior centers for senior groups.

Invite friends, family, or neighbors over for an activity - cooking, baking, gardening, or games...the options are endless!

Adult day programs - ask your local recreation or senior center about their senior programming options (transportation will likely be provided!)

Life-long Learning - meet a friend at the library, try an art or music class, or engage in a volunteer activity.

See the resource pages for ways to stay engaged!



Some Options to Support Your Wellness in Franklin County!

The Classics (50+) Day & Overnight Trips



705 W. 15th St.

785.242.1939

ORCKS.org

We enjoy 2 trips a month with our 50+ patrons! This is a great way to experience new forms of recreation while making new friends! Trips are published quarterly (most trips are via charter bus). Past trips have included tours of Arrowhead Stadium, Allen Field House, visiting the Clydesdale Horses, season tickets to the New Theatre, murder mysteries, ceramics, & more!

Adult & Senior Classes

- Pilates w/ Mimi
- Silver Sneakers
- Yoga Basics & Chair Yoga
- Upstairs Fitness Center & Open Gym
- Cell Phones 101
- Internet Safety
- A Night to Remember

Art Jam + Live Bluegrass Jam

Every Wed 5-8 pm

Every Wed 6:30-8 pm

Bring your own ART to our weekly Art Jam, held in our Art Studio and meet other artists working on their own art. Great way to find new inspiration and make new friends, while listening to LIVE music.

Paint, craft, build, and create projects for only \$5 EVERY FRIDAY!



204 S Main St. Ottawa, Kansas
(785) 248-4772

thecollectiveheartstore@gmail.com

STAINED GLASS, CANDLE MAKING, MOSAICS, KNITTING, CROCHETING, PAINTING PROJECTS, AND SO MUCH MORE!



Supporting Caregivers Through Respite

The Kansas Initiative for Alzheimer's and Dementia Relief



Kansas Respite for Alzheimer's & Dementia Program (K-RAD) offers vital support for family caregivers who have limited access to respite care. This program provides relief for unpaid caregivers of individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

Eligibility

To qualify for K-RAD, caregivers must:

- Be 18 years or older and a family member or informal caregiver.
- Provide care for someone with a probable diagnosis of Alzheimer's or related dementia.
- Live in Kansas in the same home as the care recipient. Exceptions can be requested for non-cohabiting caregivers.

Respite Services

K-RAD respite services offer temporary relief for caregivers through:

- **In-home respite:** Personal care, homemaker services, and other in-home support.
- **Nonresidential respite:** Care recipient attendance at a senior center or similar program.
- **Institutional respite:** Short-term placement in a nursing home or similar facility.
- **Flex services:** Assistance designed to support caregiving duties.

For more information, contact ECKAAA 785.242.7200 or 1.800.633.5624

Some Options to Support Your Wellness in Franklin County!

FR CO Commission Chambers, 1418 S. Main St. Ottawa



APRIL 21, 2026 | WOMEN'S HEALTH OVER THE AGE OF 65

Bridget Abney, MD; AdventHealth Ottawa OBGYN

Learn how to stay healthy, active, and independent as you age! This session highlights common health changes, preventive care, and practical strategies to support physical, emotional, and overall well-being in later life.

RSVP by Tuesday, April 7 by calling 785-229-3530.

Questions? Call 785-229-3530 • www.franklincoks.org/health

Funded thru a grant from ECKAAA as funded by the Older Americans Act through the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services. ECKAAA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, origin, sex, age, religious belief, or disability. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the ECKAAA, 1-800-633-5621. (TDD: 1-800-766-3777)



**Lunch
n'
Learn**

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Build a stronger, healthier you!

Join this strength training class, twice a week for one-hour and improve your health.

- Increase your overall fitness, flexibility and balance.
- Build muscle and increase bone density to reduce frailty, osteoporosis and the risk of falls.
- Meet new people.
- Take home a handy exercise guide to continue the program.

Exercise equipment is provided in class.

CLASS DETAILS

March 25 through May 22, 2026

10 AM to 11 AM
Wednesdays and Fridays
No Class April 29

Richmond United Methodist Church
 116 N Kallock Street
 Richmond, KS 66080

REGISTER NOW!

For questions or to register, contact Chelsea Richmond at crichmon@ksu.edu or call the Frontier District Gamett Office at 785.448.6826.

Registration is requested by **March 20** with \$20 registration fee (free to those 60 and older with a local grant through the East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging).

an equal opportunity/ADA institution

Serving Anderson • Coffey • Franklin • Lane • Miami • Osage

Extension

Our physical therapists will create an individualized program to reduce the risk of falls.

HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP

- Build muscle power and stability
- Improve body control and awareness
- Address discomfort that may contribute to falls
- Enhance range of motion and movement
- Build stamina and overall fitness
- Education on modifiable risk factors

VISIT: SERCTHERAPY.COM

New to Medicare Seminars
April 8th
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
117 S. Main Street, Ottawa
Please REGISTER by calling 785.242.7200

Some Options to Support Your Wellness in Anderson & Coffey Counties!

<p>Garnett Senior Center 128 W. 5th Ave. 785.448.0065</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals served M-F 12PM • Friendship Day: 1st Wed. of the month @ 12 p.m. • Birthday Day: 3rd Wed. of the month @ 12 p.m. • Pitch: Every Thurs. @ 6 p.m. 	<h3 style="background-color: #2c3e50; color: white; padding: 5px;">Prairie Spirit Trail State Park</h3> <p>The Prairie Spirit Trail State Park runs from Ottawa to Iola, offering plenty of recreation and enjoyment for birdwatchers, cyclists, walkers, joggers and anyone with a desire to explore the heartland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counties: Allen, Anderson, Franklin • Length: 51 miles • Trail end points: W Tecumseh St. (Ottawa) and W Bruner St. (Iola) • Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone
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6 WEEK INTRO. YOGA FOR ARTHRITIS CLASS W/ JODI SMITH

<p>Jodi is a certified yoga instructor, trained in YFA</p> <p>FREE! Please call to sign up: 785.418.2419</p>	<p>*YFA is an evidence-based organization*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce pain • reduce stress • improve your sleep • increase range of motion & flexibility <p>Sponsored by:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging <i>Serving - Anderson - Coffey - Franklin - Linn - Miami - Osage</i> </div>	<p>When: Mondays 10:00 am March 23 - April 26...continues each Monday!</p> <p>Where: Garnett Rec. Center 510 Lake Road</p>
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Also offered at the Methodist Church in OTTAWA! Wednesdays at 2:00 pm!

FALL RISK ASSESSMENT EVENT

CALL TO RESERVE A TIME:
785.242.7200

April 16, 2026

11:00 - 2:45

15 MINUTE SESSIONS

East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging
Serving - Anderson - Coffey - Franklin - Linn - Miami - Osage

GARNETT KANSAS
Small, Serene, Simply Garnett.

SERC
Physical Therapy

MUST BE 60 OR OVER & RESIDE IN ANDERSON, COFFEY, FRANKLIN, LINN, MIAMI, OR OSAGE COUNTY

AQUATICS FOR ARTHRITIS

This Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program is a water exercise program for people with arthritis and related conditions. It was developed jointly by the Arthritis Foundation and the YMCA of the USA, and is currently supported by the Aquatic Exercise Association. AFAP is designed to reduce fatigue, pain, and stiffness, and improve mobility, muscle strength, and coordination.

Tuesdays and Thursdays
12:30PM-1:30PM
February 3-April 7
No class Spring Break (March 17 & 19)

Led by instructors Lindsay Beyer and Justin Logan
Burlington Rec Center

1110 Shea St. Burlington, Kansas
620.364.8484

Some Options to Support Your Wellness in Linn County!

	<p>Chair Exercise Mon, Wed, & Fri 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>Join us for easy chair exercises. You can come for one day or everyday, we will be here no matter what!</p>	<p>HIVE Library at Pleasanton KS 752 Main St. Pleasanton, Kansas 66075</p> <p>► Library Hours Mon - Fri: 10am - 5pm</p> <p>► Phone ☎ (913) 352-8554</p>
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Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Build a stronger, healthier you!

Join this strength training class, twice a week for one-hour and improve your health.

- Increase your overall fitness, flexibility and balance.
- Build muscle and increase bone density to reduce frailty, osteoporosis and the risk of falls.
- Meet new people.
- Take home a handy exercise guide to continue the program.

Exercise equipment is provided in class.



CLASS DETAILS

Tuesdays & Thursdays
10:00 am - 11:00 am

March 24, 26, 31
 April 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 23, 28, 30
 May 5, 7, 12, 14, 19
NO CLASS APRIL 21ST
No Registration Fee!

Class registration paid through a grant from the East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging.

Parker Library
 234 W Main Street, Parker, KS

REGISTER NOW!

RSVP 913-795-2829







Some Options to Support Your Wellness in Miami & Osage Counties!

MONTHLY!
MONDAY, APRIL 6TH
11:00-11:30 AM
Remembering
with Holly
LOUISBURG SENIOR CENTER
504 S. METCALF RD.

SHARE STORIES, PHOTOS, & MEMORABILIA
CONTACT: HGILLOGLY@LOUISBURGLIBRARY.ORG

Homebound
Library
Delivery

(913) 837-2217

The Louisburg Library provides outreach to community members who are unable to visit the library or do not have someone to pick up materials for them. **We will deliver materials** to residents in individual residences within the library district, senior living sites or nursing centers. These services are available for individuals or groups.

Paola Pathways
Connecting our Community

A multi-use trails system connecting the community of Paola, Kansas. The system links key locations throughout the city. Trails include a variety of surfaces and distances designed for walkers, runners, and bicyclists. In addition to seating at each trailhead, donor-sponsored benches are located along the trail to provide a place to sit and enjoy the scenery.

Pickleball
 Wildcat activity center
 7 S. Peoria St Louisburg, KS
 Mon., Wed., Fri. 7:30 - 9:00 am
FREE! No Experience Req'd!

**SENIOR CENTER EXPLORES:
 MACRAME COASTER
 @ LOUISBURG SENIOR CENTER
 APRIL 24, 2026
 10:00 - 11:30**

FLINT HILLS TRAIL "MILE ZERO" OSAWATOMIE, KS

Mondays

8:00: Sewing Chicks
 9:00: Exercise w/instructor
 Art Class
 12:00: ECKAAA Senior Nutrition Program
 12:30: Mexican Train Dominoes
 5:15: Pitch (Bring a Snack)

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays
9:00: Exercise (Instructor Lead) 9:30: Donuts, Coffee, & Conversation 10:00: Bingo (Quarter Bingo) with Maria from Hometown Health Care 12:00: ECKAAA Senior Nutrition Program 12:30: Mexican Train Dominoes 2:00: High Rollers Game 2:00: Learn to Play Mahjong	8:00: Sewing Chicks 9:00: Sewing Gals 9:00: Exercise (Instructor Lead) 10:30: Angles Care HH Free Blood Pressure Checks 12:00: ECKAAA Senior Nutrition Program 12:30: Mexican Train Dominoes 2:00: Make N Take Crafts	9:00: Art Cass 9:00: Exercise (Instructor Lead) 12:00: ECKAAA Senior Nutrition Program 12:30: Mexican Train Dominoes 1:00: Ceramics Class \$5 Supplies 2:00: High Rollers Game

National Senior Health & Fitness Day is May 27th!



117 S. Main
Ottawa, KS 66067