

# AGING **best**

Area Agency on Aging



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## CURBSIDE MEALS

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## From the beginning of COVID-19 to now, Aging Best has been busy serving seniors in the community

As Missouri's restaurants and other businesses, began to close amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Aging Best knew the senior centers would have to temporarily close as well. Aging Best decided that in order to continue providing nutrition for seniors, we would have to be innovative and creative.

Aging Best began offering curbside meals in place of congregate meals. Curbside meals allow us to continue serving meals while following the CDC guidelines. Aging Best already provided home delivered meals, but expanded that program in order to reach more seniors who may not want to leave their homes during this time.

Aging Best staff remain positive and cheerful despite the stressful situation. We are wearing masks and gloves for increased safety, and trying new creative ideas to make curbside meals fun and exciting.

Several centers began adding special messages to their curbside boxes to lift spirits and let those in the community know we are thinking about them. So many great ideas were pouring out of the Aging Best staff it was difficult to keep up. Aging Best encourages creativity and innovative thinking and staff are delivering. Some centers were playing curbside Bingo, providing word puzzles and other games for seniors to play in the comfort of their own homes.



Pictured Above: Eldon Senior Center curbside meal boxes

## Easter fun the COVID-19 way

Staff at the Waynesville Senior Center wanted to put a smile on everyone's face. What better way than with the Easter bunny, cupcakes, and flowers.



Pictured Above: Waynesville Curbside Easter Bunny

## Aging Best establishes partnerships to best serve seniors

The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri provided extra food to several of Aging Best's senior programs. The food bank partners with Aging Best to provide regular food assistance to many of the senior programs. The extra shipment was very much appreciated during this time of need. Items such as milk and fresh produce were picked up and distributed through Aging Best's new partnership with Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri. Aging Best is grateful to Catholic Charities for making the drive, loading and unloading throughout several counties. We equally thank The Food Bank for providing the extra assistance on such short notice.



Pictured: John Doyle of Catholic Charities presents products to Aging Best staff members Janice Claas and Teresa Liebi at the California Nutrition Center.

## Delivering more than food

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri distributed hygiene products to several of Aging Best's senior programs. The products were provided by Unilever and distributed to home bound seniors in need. With many seniors staying at home, these are products they may not have access to, or are under pressure to reduce expenses during this time. Aging Best and the seniors receiving products are very thankful for the generosity of Catholic Charities and Unilever.



Pictured left: John Doyle of Catholic Charities delivering food bank produce, milk, and other food items to the senior centers

# Give Us This Day Bread Drive at Helias High School

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, The Diocese of Jefferson City and Helias Catholic High School hosted a bread drive for Aging Best's senior programs. The "Give Us This Day" bread drive provided more than 300 loaves of bread. Volunteers collected bread from the trunks of cars allowing donors to participate without having to leave their cars. The many senior centers receiving bread were very appreciative as it is an item that is always in great need and the centers go through quickly.



Pictured above: Fern Robertson and Beverly Vinyard



Pictured above: Sonya White with the Sayers Senior Center

## Potosi Police Department delivers necessities

The Potosi Police Department donated several boxes of rolls of toilet paper to the Sayers Senior Center in Potosi. Toilet Paper is in high demand and we are certainly thankful for their donation. .

## Aging Best works with DogMaster Distillery to provide hand sanitizer

Aging Best. worked with DogMaster Distillery to provide 60 gallons of hand sanitizer for the senior centers, not only in the 19 counties we serve, but also for senior centers throughout Missouri. Hand sanitizer is in high demand and being able to provide a gallon to each center was vital to providing safe meals for seniors.

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## Ombudsman get creative and do "window visits"

Aging Best Ombudsmen, with the help of Ombudsman Volunteers, are making weekly phone calls to all long-term care facilities in our nineteen counties. Most facilities are providing ways for family and friends to connect with their loved ones using "walk around" phones, personal cell phones, Skype, Zoom, Facebook and allowing window visits. Aging Best Ombudsman are taking all calls from residents, facility staff and family members regarding questions or concerns. Additionally, they are checking on the staff members who are caring for residents, and they are assisting with transfer/discharge notices. They are also working with hospital Social Workers to find temporary placement when post-hospital quarantine is required. Aging Best Ombudsman are passionate about what they do and COVID-19 has not slowed them down a bit. They continue to advocate for seniors in long-term care facilities.

## Telephonic Reassurance becomes a reality

Aging Best has dreamed of providing telephonic reassurance to check on the well-being of those who are home bound or without additional supports.



Pictured: above: Ombudsman Volunteer, Eledia Stone, visiting residents at a nursing home.

That dream became a reality in March of this year when CDC recommendations forced us to limit contact and work from home. Aging Best staff quickly came together, developed a plan, and were able to provide telephonic reassurance to 358 seniors in March. Telephonic Reassurance provides seniors with a person they can count on for information, connection, assistance, and some stability in this difficult time. This is truly a much needed and comforting service. We've received so much positive feedback and sincere thanks from seniors in our communities. We plan to continue this service when we are through the COVID-19 crisis.

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# Did you know.....

- Aging Best, with offices in Columbia and Jefferson City, employs a staff of 140 dedicated individuals.
- Aging Best covers the administration and compliance of 31 senior centers offering daily meals and activities. At the present time, and in following CDC recommendations the centers are offering curbside meals to avoid contact.
- Aging Best's Ombudsman team provides assistance with long-term care placement and assuring the rights of residents in long-term care homes.
- Aging Best offers health and wellness courses to seniors. Programs including Chronic Disease Self-Management Education, Tai Chi for Arthritis, and A Matter of Balance are offered.

**57,000**

Number of seniors receiving home delivered meals from Aging Best each month

**25,000**

The number of seniors receiving meals at the senior centers on average each month

**1,100**

Number of seniors receiving information and assistance services each month



# AGING **best**

To see each person live his or her best possible life

I understand that people have questions about when our senior centers will be open for a return to congregate meals and programming.

As many establishments prepare to open their doors for business, Aging Best will continue to follow the guidance of medical professionals, as well as federal and state counsel that call for "vulnerable populations" to remain sheltered in place until phase-one of reopening businesses and activities stabilize.

We aren't certain when it will be deemed "safer" for seniors to once again congregate and we won't have answers to that question until we follow the success or challenges of other businesses that open during phase-one. Initial guidance advises it may be 30 days or more before there is sufficient information to evaluate the safety of seniors congregating. We will, however, continue to work diligently to provide daily services to people in our area such as curbside meals, home delivered meals, ombudsman advocacy, assessment and case management, information and assistance, and telephone and other remote reassurance contact among others.

We appreciate your patience as we make difficult decisions about 'unknowns.' We are using the best guidance available to protect the health and well-being of those we serve.

Have a wonderful day.

*Rebecca Nowlin*

Rebecca Nowlin, LPC  
Chief Executive Officer