



*Girl Scout Troop 71409*

*Anna Venneman*

*Monty Nichols*

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Anna Venneman first heard about Aging Best's Friendly Visitor program through her church. The Crossing, located in Columbia, provides a list of volunteering opportunities to its Community Response Team. Friendly Visitor matches volunteers with older adults who enjoy receiving phone calls and making new friends. Social isolation among homebound seniors has become even more prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Friendly Visitor provides a means of staying connected when unable to leave home.

Anna, a Pathologist and busy mother of two, saw the program as a great way to give back without having to schedule time during her weekend days off. She was matched with Curt Sartain, a senior from a neighboring county. Every Wednesday after work Anna calls Curt. The two have found plenty to talk about. "This program

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gives me the opportunity to be a listening ear and friend to someone who may be more isolated than normal. I'm also grateful to receive the friendship of someone with so much wisdom and life experience," said Venneman.



*Curt Sartain*

Sartain agrees. "I really enjoy visiting with her. We talk about our kids, life, the world and all kinds of stuff," he added. The Crossing has several members volunteering for the program. Each has been matched with a senior and converses on a regular basis.

In 2020 most nonprofit organizations saw a decrease in volunteers. Aging Best had a loss of 10,785 volunteer match hours related to the pandemic. "We had to get creative and make some adjustments," said Melissa Schulte, Network Coordinator for Aging Best. "We are looking forward to some of our volunteers being able to return in 2021. We know they miss

the volunteering experience as much as we miss the assistance they provide. We truly appreciate all they do."

Monty Nichols is happy he was able to continue volunteering. Aging Best delivers meals to his apartment in Paquin Towers. The 15-story building in Columbia can be challenging to navigate with the large number of meals all in one location. When the crew arrives Nichols masks up and assists with the deliveries to each floor.

Last week Aging Best was blessed to have Girl Scout Troop 71409 from the Taos/Wardsville area help out. The



*Hailey Kampeter & Clara Poston*

girls helped with Aging Best's pet assistance program by rebagging the pet food into smaller bags to be distributed to older adults who have pet companions but struggle with the cost of care. "Volunteering makes me

happy," said Hailey Kampeter. "It felt good to help seniors get food for their pets," added Clara Poston. For more information on volunteering for or donating to Aging Best's programs:

**800-369-5211**

[www.agingbest.org](http://www.agingbest.org)



## **POST-VACCINE GUIDELINES**

Many Americans have received a COVID-19 vaccine, and many others will be receiving theirs in the coming months. Though we are still learning how vaccines will affect the spread of COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend we continue taking precautions. If you are fully vaccinated the following guidelines should be followed:

- You may gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without a mask or staying six feet apart.
- If you travel in the United States, you do not need to be tested or quarantine before or after travel.

- Pay close attention to the situation at international destinations before traveling outside the United States.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people of any age from one other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks or a six foot distance unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19 you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms.
- If you live in a group setting (like a correctional, detention facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you don't have any symptoms.

In addition, the centers recommend we continue taking the following precautions when in public, gathering with unvaccinated people, visiting an unvaccinated person at increased risk or who lives with someone with an increased risk:

- Wear a mask, and stay at least six feet away from others
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces

**For assistance scheduling  
your COVID-19 vaccine  
please call Aging Best at:  
800-369-5211**

Learn more about post-vaccine safety by visiting [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## **LONG-TERM CARE RESTRICTION UPDATES**

Long-Term Care Facilities in Missouri have seen severe consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic. Many locations have experienced facility-wide outbreaks with accompanying high mortality numbers.

With test positivity rates declining and vaccination rates increasing, the State has developed the following guidance to safely ease restrictions in long-term care facilities including residential care, assisted living, intermediate care and skilled nursing.

- Screening of all who enter for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (temperature checks, questions about and observations of signs or symptoms), and denial of entry to those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the prior 14 days regardless of vaccination status

- Proper hand hygiene and sanitation
- Wear a face covering or mask over the mouth and nose
- Social distancing at least six feet. (Fully vaccinated residents may choose to have close contact with their visitor while adhering to the other core principles).
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices such as use of face coverings, specified entries, exits, routes to designated areas, and hand hygiene
- Cleaning/disinfecting frequently touched surfaces in the facility often and in designated visitation areas after each visit
- Appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Ombudsman volunteers advocate for those living in long-term care facilities. They have continued to make contact throughout the COVID-19 crisis. The program accepts and trains volunteers over the age of 18. For information on becoming an Ombudsman volunteer call or visit:

800-369-5211

[www.agingbest.org](http://www.agingbest.org).



## SPRING SAFETY TIPS

Spring has officially sprung. Though we are able to stop worrying about frostbite and slipping on the ice, there are many safety hazards associated with the season. A few guidelines for safety are:

- Watch out for slick surfaces. The ice is gone, but the rainy season is upon us. Be aware during and after rain. Sidewalks or porches may be slippery. Accidents often happen when returning from outside. Upon entering your home during or after rain be sure to wipe your feet well before stepping onto any hard surface.
- Protect your skin. Spring can be very deceiving. It may feel cool outside, but the sun is often bright enough to cause a sunburn. Wear hats and lightweight clothing, including long sleeves and pants when possible. Apply sunscreen to all areas of exposed skin and allow it to dry and absorb before going out.

- Avoid the wind. Windy weather can be dangerous to drivers and walkers as well. If you use a cane, walker or have balance insecurity avoid being outside on windy days. If you must be out look for stable railings or walls for added balance.



- Have a storm plan. Tornadoes and thunderstorms are most likely to occur in spring. If you live in an apartment, long-term care or assisted living facility make sure you know the designated area for storm safety. If you live in a single family home plan to go to a central room or basement. Do not wait until a storm warning occurs to find look for a safe place. Be prepared as storms often occur with very little warning.

Spring is one of the most beautiful times of the year. It is a great time for walks, planting your garden or just enjoying the flowers. Safety is always of the utmost importance. Be aware of weather conditions and make sure you are knowledgeable and prepared before going out.



Irish tradition was in full swing at Salem Senior Center. At left, festive staff and volunteers greeted curbside guests. The participants including Larry Baranowski, right, were also in the holiday spirit.



Catherine Crouch, had a great time handling the phone lines for the Easter meal at Tipton Nutrition Center.



Curbside guests at Hughes Senior Center in Lebanon got to choose eggs for a chance to win some great prizes.



Sandi Snearly prepared goodie bags for the many participants at Camdenton Senior Center.



Volunteer Kyle May, left, helps DeWaldon Frazier from The Food Bank for Central & Northeast MO unload six pallets of pet food. The food will be used to help older adults who have pet companions and struggle with the cost of their care. At right, Marissa Peterson, Director of Community Options & Services at Aging Best, assists with the delivery.

