



Rose and Baby



Jack and Tom



Marcella and Winnie

Robotic Pets Make Great Companions

Frank Haymart began caring for his wife of 64 years following a stroke five years ago. Rose was left with limited speech and decision making capabilities along with some physical impairments. Frank was excited to hear about the Robotic Pet Project, a program that provides robotic animals for comfort and companionship. "It has really helped," he said. "She talks to it for hours and never wants to put it down. She is really attached to it and is so happy when it's with her."

Rose is one of more than 20 robotic pet recipients in Aging Best's 19-county region. The project has quickly become very popular and interest continues to grow.

"Made possible through No Wrong Door CARES Act funding, this project was the collective work of MA4 (Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging), the Institute for Human Development and Missouri Assistive

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Technology," said David Baker, Director of Missouri Assistive Technology. "We were trying to find a low-tech, low-cost, yet fun way to address the issue of social isolation for seniors and people with disabilities through the use of robotic pets."

The pets bark, meow, purr, blink, wag their tails and seek attention. Connie Elmore lost her husband less than a year ago. "Toby sits where he used to sit," she said of her robotic dog. "I often find myself talking to him."



Connie and Toby

Like Connie, most of the recipients have named their pets. "She's just precious," said Joann Glaser of Princess, of her robotic cat. "I enjoy holding her and even cover her up on cold nights."



Joann and Princess



Joyce and Baby Ginger

Some of the pets have even become local celebrities. Joyce Costa-Randle lives in an active retirement community. She often sits outside with her pet. "Everyone enjoys seeing her," she said. "They like to get her to bark." Jack Roberson, a volunteer at Vienna Senior Center, brought his robotic dog to the center and let everyone help decide on the name. Tom, is the name they chose.

"These pets provide companionship and comfort without the responsibility of a live pet," said Melissa Schulte, Network Coordinator for Aging Best. "Robotic pet owners are able to relax and just enjoy them." Marcella Butler couldn't agree more. "She's like having a real cat," she said of her cat, Winnie. "She's adorable."

For more information on the Robotic Pet Project please contact Melissa Schulte at 573-489-3260 or email: mschulte@agingbest.org.

For more pictures and information about Aging Best, like and follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram at:

www.facebook.com/agingbest.org
www.instagram.com/agingbest

Senior Centers Reopen

Senior Centers in Central Missouri will soon be open. Many have already resumed dining room service and activities. More will be opening within the next month.

"We are still observing the recommended safety guidelines," said Jamie Kennedy, Associate Director of Community Options & Services. "It has been a tough year, and we know everyone is excited to get together again. We want to make it a safe and enjoyable experience."

Curbside meals are also still available for those who are not yet ready to be in a congregate setting. Below is a list of open centers and schedule reopening dates.

AUDRAIN

- Mexico Senior Center - Open

BOONE

- Columbia Area Senior Activity Center - Open

CAMDEN

- Camdenton Senior Center - Open
- Mack's Creek Senior Center - Open
- Osage Beach Senior Center - Open

COLE

- Clarke Senior Center - Open
- West Point Senior Center - July 1

COOPER

- Boonslick Senior Center - Open

CRAWFORD

- Bourbon Senior Center - Open
- Cuba Senior Center - Open

DENT

- Salem Senior Center - Open

GASCONADE

- Owensville Senior Center - Open

HOWARD

- Fayette Senior Citizen Center - Open
- Glasgow Senior Center - Open

LACLEDE

- Conway Senior Center - Open
- Hughes Senior Center - Open
- Stoutland Senior Center - Open

MARIES

- Vienna Senior Center - July 1

MILLER

- Eldon Senior Center - June 21
- Iberia Friendship Hall - Open

MONITEAU

- California Senior Center - Open
- Tipton Nutrition Center - TBD

MORGAN

- Versailles Nutrition Site - Open
- Westside Senior Center - TBD

PHELPS

- Rolla Highrise - June 14

PULASKI

- Crocker Senior Center - Open
- Dixon Senior Center - Open
- Warren Senior Center - Open
- Waynesville Senior Center - Open

WASHINGTON

- Sayers Senior Center - Open



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was held June 15, 2021. The event was launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

Abuse can happen anywhere, including home, a family member's house, or in an assisted living, retirement or long-term care home. The mistreatment can occur by family members, strangers, health care providers, caregivers, or friends.

Awareness and recognition are the first steps toward prevention. Below are some of the signs an older adult in an abusive situation might display:

- Displays signs of trauma, like rocking back and forth
- Has unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, or scars
- Looks messy, with unwashed hair or dirty clothes
- Becomes withdrawn or acts agitated or violent

- Develops bed sores or other preventable conditions
- Loses weight for no reason
- Lacks medical aids (glasses, walker, dentures, hearing aid, medications)
- Has broken eyeglasses/frames, or physical signs of being restrained



- Has an eviction notice for unpaid rent, notice of late mortgage, or home eviction
- Has hazardous, unsafe, or unclean living conditions
- Displays signs of insufficient care or unpaid bills despite adequate financial resources

Older adults are often reluctant to ask for help. Someone else will often need to step in. If you suspect an older adult is being abused what is the next step?

- If you feel the person is in immediate danger don't hesitate to call 911
- If you feel the danger is not immediate but should be reported call 800-392-0210 (for suspected abuse at home or in long-term care)

Learn more by visiting: www.ncea.acl.gov.

Want to Connect with Family and Friends?



- Ever wondered where your high school friends are now?
- Want to try a face-to-face call with distant family or friends?
- Would you like an email or Facebook account to stay connected to friends and family?
- Are you interested in finding new friends?

Aging Best's Virtual Visitor program can help you do any of the above and much more. Computer skills are not necessary. For more information call or email Melissa Schulte 573-489-3260 or 800-369-5211 mschulte@agingbest.org.

Volunteers Needed

The Missouri Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is searching for volunteers to advocate for older adults and disabled individuals residing in assisted living, skilled care, long-term homes and homes for veterans. Volunteer Ombudsmen visit with residents and help them voice their wishes and concerns,

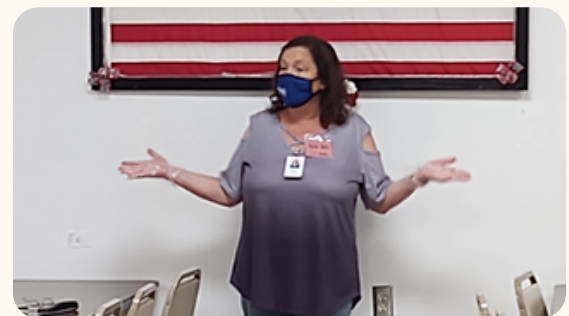


inform them of and advocate for their rights.

If you are interested in giving back to your community, and making a difference in the many lives you will touch, consider the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. For more information call 800-369-5211 or email dwobbe@agingbest.org.

Savings Programs

Trish Luther, Community Options & Services Manager for Aging Best, gave a great presentation to seniors in Morgan County. Trish provided information on Medicare Savings Programs (MSP), Low Income Subsidy (LIS), Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and more.



If you are interested in scheduling a presentation on any savings program please call 573-443-5823..



Omer and Inez Brisendine (above) were happy to get back to the dining room at Clarke Senior Center.



Dixon Senior Center received a beautiful quilt (above) made of T-shirts from senior center and local events. The quilt will be displayed at the center.



Candy Maines (left) enjoys spending time with her robotic pet companion, Peabody.



Lolita Long (above) enjoyed being back in the dining room and catching up with Howard Jeffries at Mexico Senior Center.



Marion Whitfield (above) was also the recipient of a new companion she decided to name Joy.

Staff and volunteers at Dixon Senior Center (right) had a great time celebrating Bernie Slattery's 92nd birthday.

