



OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

In tough times, communities find strength in people – and people find strength in their communities. In the past year, we've seen this time and again in central Missouri as friends, neighbors, and businesses have found new ways to support each other.

In our community, older adults are a key source of this strength. Through their experiences, successes, and difficulties, they have built resilience that helps them to face new challenges. When communities tap into this, they become stronger, too.

Each May, the Administration for Community Living leads the celebration of Older Americans Month (OAM). This year's theme is Communities of Strength, recognizing the important role older adults play in fostering the connection and engagement that build strong, resilient communities.

Strength is built and shown not only by bold acts, but also small ones of day-to-day-life, a conversation shared with a

IN THIS ISSUE

Older Americans Month: 1 - 2

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program: 3

Ombudsman Volunteer Dixie Wyatt: 4

SNAP, Grocery Assistance: 5

Agging Best Activities: 6

friend, working in the garden, trying a new recipe, or taking time for a cup of tea on a busy day. And when we share these activities with others – even virtually or by telling about the experience later – we help them build resilience too.

This year, Aging Best Area Agency on Aging will celebrate OAM by encouraging community members to share experiences. Together, we can find strength and create a stronger future. Here are some ways to share and connect:

- Look for joy in the everyday: Celebrate small moments and ordinary pleasures by taking time to recognize them. Start a gratitude journal and share it with others via social media, or call a friend or family member to share a happy moment or to say thank you.
- Reach out to neighbors: Even if you can't get together in person right now, you can still connect with your neighbors. Leave a small gift on their doorstep, offer to help with outdoor chores, or deliver a homecooked meal.



- Build new skills: Learning something new allows us to practice overcoming challenges. Take an art course online or try a socially distanced outdoor movement class to enjoy learning with others in your community. Have a skill to share? Find an opportunity to teach someone, even casually.
- Share your story: There's a reason storytelling is a time-honored activity. Hearing how others experience the world helps us grow. Interviewing family, friends, and neighbors can open up new conversations and strengthen our connections.

When people of different ages, abilities, backgrounds and talents are able to share experiences through action, story or service, we build stronger communities. That's something to celebrate!

For more resources, visit the official OAM website:

<https://acl.gov/oam/2021/older-americans-month-2021>

Please join Aging Best in helping to strengthen our communities. Learn more about volunteering opportunities in your area by calling: 800-369-5211 or visiting www.agingbest.org.

Follow Aging Best on Facebook and/or Instagram for news, contests and information.

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



SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Aging Best is excited to again be one of four organizations in Missouri chosen to take part in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Federally funded by USDA, FNS, the program is aimed at increasing the consumption of Missouri-grown agriculture commodities. The program is also designed to assist Missouri growers and to enhance farmers' markets and roadside stands.

Participating households will have the opportunity to receive \$50 in vouchers to be used for the purchase of Missouri-grown produce and honey. The vouchers may be used at farmers' markets and stands displaying the following signage:



Each voucher will be worth \$5 with a total of ten issued. Participants may begin using vouchers beginning June 1, 2021. All vouchers must be redeemed no later than October 31, 2021. Homebound individuals may send an authorized proxy

if they are unable to select and deliver their items. All participants will also receive educational information emphasizing the relationship between nutrition and health. The goal of the program is to encourage healthy eating patterns by focusing on fresh items that have not been compromised by additives and preservatives.

To qualify for the Missouri Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program applicants must:

- Show proof of identity
- Be 60 years of age or older
- Qualifying income level OR participate in Missouri's SNAP or CSFP programs
- Show proof of residency in one of the following counties:

Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Camden, Cole, Cooper, Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Howard, Laclede, Maries, Miller, Moniteau, Morgan, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski or Washington

If you are or know a senior who would like to apply for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program contact Aging Best at:

573-443-5823

or

800-369-5211

Q AND A WITH DIXIE WYATT, OMBUDSMAN VOLUNTEER



Dixie Wyatt

The Ombudsman program relies heavily on the generous volunteers who provide services. We recently visited with long-time volunteer Dixie Wyatt .

Aging Best: How long have you been with the Ombudsman program?

I've been the Ombudsman for Candlelight Lodge & Parkside Manor for about five years. Both have older buildings with structural and financial issues. Turnover among administrators and management is frequent. Normally, I visit each home every other week with extra calls in between as needed.

Aging Best: How has the COVID - 19 pandemic impacted how you provide services as an Ombudsman volunteer?

Dixie: During the lockdown of homes I found it difficult to adequately stay in touch. A short phone conversation with no privacy was insufficient. I spoke with

around three or four residents per week during the lockdown. When I visited in person it was around 35 - 45. I often was not always able to speak to a resident since I was dependent on the home's staff to find the resident.

Aging Best: Do you feel there is an increased need for volunteers, and are you excited to be back to in-person visits?

The need has become even more evident over the last year. Residents in long-term care homes have suffered greatly from the restrictions of Covid. Being restricted to their room, decreased recreational activities, visitors not being allowed, having to remain in the building except for medical appointments and not being able to eat in the dining room with peers all contributed to the hardships they faced. I was very happy to return to in-home visits in April. I was met with smiles and hugs from old friends and was able to introduce myself to many newer residents and their families. I'm glad to be able to advocate again for those who often don't have anyone else to speak up for them.

For more information on becoming an Ombudsman volunteer call 800-369-5211 or email dwobbe@agingbest.org.



Need Help Paying for Groceries?

You May be Eligible for SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp program) can be a great benefit for older adults who may need assistance paying for groceries.

Over four million older Americans use SNAP to buy healthy food at their local store or market. For qualifying individuals, the program can assist with groceries and improve their overall budget.

Though many older adults live on a fixed income, the over 60 age group has the lowest SNAP participation of all groups. Adequate food and nutrition are essential for older adults to adhere to medication regimen, manage chronic conditions, and avoid injury.

One of the causes may be transportation to or the fear of going into a busy Social Services office.



A simple call to Aging Best can make the process quick and easy. The entire application can be completed by phone and mail. Your SNAP benefits can be issued without leaving your home.

When you call Aging Best, one of our Specialists will also assess your eligibility for other money savings programs in addition to SNAP. Our goal is always to find savings for you.

SNAP also helps the local economy. Benefits are spent at local grocery stores and markets, thereby infusing money into the local economy.

To learn more about and check your eligibility for SNAP contact us today at:

800-369-5211



Spring Activities



Staff members from Eldon Senior Center and their families participated in a 5K event to bring awareness to People Against Child Trafficking (P.A.C.T.), a cause they care deeply about.



Curbside Volunteers, Frances Proffit, Darlene Meador, Jan Kurowski, Carmen Brown and Vickie Schroeder (left) and Art Burger (right) were among the volunteers at California Nutrition Center who received a gift basket during a week-long celebration of volunteers in April.



"Betty Bunny" (left), greeted guests at Boonslick Senior Center. Betty handed out special treats to go with the Easter meal.

Mae Helton (right) was very happy to receive her lifelike, robotic pet companion. Aging Best handed out 21 companion pets in April.

