



Crosslake Area Senior Services, Inc.

Connecting Seniors to Services

# SENIOR CONNECTIONS

Volume 17 | Winter 2026

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

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Join us for

## SENIOR DAYS & EXPO

April 23, 24, & 25, 2026

- ✓ Senior Bingo
- ✓ Senior Presentations
- ✓ Senior 3K Walk
- ✓ Senior Restaurant Discounts
- ✓ Senior Store Discounts
- ✓ Senior Prom
- ✓ Senior Pickleball
- ✓ Senior Golf Discounts
- ✓ Senior Expo
- ✓ Senior Trivia Night

Visit [CrosslakeCares.org](http://CrosslakeCares.org) and  
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**MIKE MAX**

WCCO Sports Director  
SENIOR EXPO KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
Sponsored by: Cuyuna Regional Medical Center

### 2026 PLATINUM EXPO SPONSOR



CRMC Orthopedics Team  
at the 2025 Crosslake Cares Senior Expo



### CELEBRATE, CONNECT & ENJOY: SENIOR DAYS WEEKEND IN CROSSLAKE

Mark your calendars for another unforgettable Senior Days Weekend & Expo, taking place Thursday, April 23 through Saturday, April 25. This highly anticipated weekend is packed with fun, learning, and connection—featuring engaging activities, informative presentations, and plenty of opportunities to gather with the community. Best of all, most events are free or offered at a discount, making them accessible and enjoyable for Crosslake's senior community.

The weekend opens with a full card of fun on Thursday with Senior Bingo at the Crosslake Fifty Lakes American Legion. Bring your friends, your lucky charms, and your competitive spirit for a full

house of fun! (American Legion License #00997). On Friday, April 24, join us at Crosslake Lutheran Church for three informative senior-focused presentations. Learn about senior technology from Tremolo Communications, hear exciting updates from the National Loon Center, and gain valuable safety tips during a fire safety presentation by the Crosslake Fire Department.

The fun continues Friday evening with Senior Trivia Night at Moonlite Bay from 4:00–6:00 PM. Enjoy discounts on food, test your knowledge, and compete for prizes in a lively atmosphere.

Saturday, April 25 is filled with back-to-back activities! Start the morning with a refreshing Senior 3K Walk, suitable for all fitness levels, beginning at The Log Church. Afterward, step inside for the Annual Senior Expo, featuring over 50 organizations



offering valuable resources for area seniors. Enjoy informative mini presentations from local experts, prize giveaways, and complimentary coffee and pastries courtesy of Café Cares. The Expo will conclude with an inspiring Keynote Address from Sports Director, Anchor, and Reporter for WCCO Mike Max, sponsored by Cuyuna Regional Medical Center. Mike's known for his long career covering local sports, hosting shows like *Sports to the Max*

on WCCO Radio and his community involvement, including work on *Life to the Max* and speaking engagements. His presentation on "Never Quit Living Your Best Life" is sure to bring engagement, awe and wonder. His message tells us that if you think you are getting too old to exercise, to find a different career, or pursue a hobby, then think again! He says the most influential people in his life are 75 years plus and still seeking. Following the Expo, head to the Crosslake Community Center (weather permitting) for Pickleball beginning at 1:30 PM. Bring your paddles and competitive spirit! The alternate location will be announced at the Expo in case of inclement weather.

Wrap up the weekend in style at the Senior Prom (sponsored by the Crosslake Ideal Lions) at Manhattan's Restaurant in Crosslake. This year's Mardi Gras-themed evening will have you dancing the night away in true New Orleans style. Doors open at 5:30 PM, followed by a three-course dinner, music from a DJ spinning the greatest hits, and dancing until 10:00 PM. For reservations, call Manhattan's at (218) 692-3381 or stop by the front desk. Call soon as reservations are limited. Credit card and meal selection are required at booking. A cash bar will be available.



Throughout Senior Days Weekend, enjoy special discounts and deals on golf at Crosswoods Golf and Whistling Wolf Mini Golf, along with exclusive offers at Crosslake retail shops and restaurants. Each year, Senior Days Weekend continues to grow—offering even more opportunities for education, recreation, and meaningful connection. We can't wait to see you there!



### “MY FEET HURT”

Foot and ankle pain is a common, but often overlooked, challenge among older adults. As we age, years of wear and tear, changes in foot structure, and chronic conditions such as arthritis or diabetes can lead to discomfort, instability, and difficulty walking. Too often, this pain is dismissed as a regular part of aging, even though it can significantly affect balance, independence, and overall quality of life.



Board-Certified Foot and Ankle Surgeon Stephen C. Schmid, DPM, FACFAS, who joined the medical staff at Cuyuna Regional Medical Center in July 2024, answers a few questions focused on foot and ankle concerns commonly experienced by older adults and how timely, specialized care can help improve comfort, mobility, and confidence.



Learn more about CRMC’s Comprehensive Foot and Ankle Program and specialists Dr. Schmid and Dr. Moore at [www.cuyunamed.org](http://www.cuyunamed.org).

Wearing well-fitting, supportive shoes with good traction is essential. Staying active with regular walking, gentle strength training, and balance exercises can help maintain muscle strength and coordination. Stretching the calves and feet daily can improve flexibility and reduce stiffness. It’s also important to check feet regularly for cuts, redness, swelling, or other changes - especially for individuals with diabetes. In some cases, braces, orthotics, or assistive devices may provide added support and stability, and a foot and ankle specialist can help determine what options are most appropriate.

- Q: What foot or ankle symptoms should seniors never ignore and seek care for right away?**

A: Older adults should contact a healthcare provider if they notice pain or swelling that does not improve, redness, warmth, drainage, or other signs of infection. Numbness or tingling, open sores or wounds that are slow to heal, sudden changes in foot shape, ankle instability, or frequent falls should also be evaluated promptly. Early care can prevent small issues from turning into more serious problems and help reduce the risk of complications.
- Q: How does aging affect foot health, balance, and mobility—and what can older adults do to reduce their risk of falls?**

A: As we age, muscles naturally weaken, the protective cushioning on the feet thins, and balance can decline. These changes can affect how we walk and increase the risk of falls. The good news is that there are many ways older adults can protect their foot health and maintain mobility.

Healthy feet play a significant role in maintaining independence, staying active, and feeling confident. Paying attention to small changes today can help prevent bigger problems tomorrow.

In addition to treating common conditions, the CRMC Foot and Ankle team welcomes second opinions and complex or revision cases and specializes in foot and ankle deformity correction and advanced surgical options, including ankle replacement. CRMC is also a designated Center of Excellence for Foot and Ankle Care - the only program in the region with this accreditation -reflecting a commitment to advanced techniques, experienced specialists, and consistently high-quality outcomes for even the most complex cases.

TOP 5 FOOT & ANKLE CONDITIONS

- Arthritis
- Plantar Fasciitis and Heel Pain
- Tendon Disorders
- Diabetic Foot Problems
- Bunions, Hammertoes, other Forefoot Deformities

### NEED A RIDE? GIVE A RIDE! SENIOR TRANSPORTATION

The transportation challenges in a small community facing our areas seniors is multifaceted. Limited transportation options, the inability to drive due to age or medical conditions, or a lack of nearby family and friends to provide regular rides all contribute to a growing sense of isolation for many older adults. For many seniors, the inability to access reliable transportation can lead to missed medical appointments, difficulty getting groceries or prescriptions, and decreased opportunities for socialization.

Recognizing the importance of transportation resources, we were determined to find a solution that would ensure seniors in the area access to the transportation they need. After extensive research and outreach, *Crosslake Cares* found the perfect partner in **Interfaith Volunteers of Crow Wing County**.

Founded in 2001, Interfaith Volunteers has been dedicated to helping seniors remain safe and independent in their homes. Their programs provide essential transportation services for seniors and construction ramps to improve accessibility for those with mobility challenges.

Through this collaboration, each organization brings its unique strengths to the table to create a seamless program for senior transportation. *Crosslake Cares* will be the connection by joining local organizations, community leaders and members to raise awareness, host informative meetings with individuals’ interest in volunteering, and answer community questions.


Interfaith Volunteers is the operations with enrolling and on-boarding volunteer drivers, providing volunteer driver training, providing liability insurance coverage, and coordinating ride requests with our volunteer drivers and seniors. At the heart of this initiative are the volunteer drivers who make this possible. These volunteer drivers provide more than just a ride, they offer companionship, a friendly face and a sense of community for our seniors. In order to make this effort a reality, we need YOUR help! Becoming a volunteer driver is a meaningful way to give back to the community and make a difference in the lives of our seniors. The commitment is flexible, there is no minimum time commitment required and Interfaith.


Volunteers ensures that all drivers receive necessary training and support. You can register to volunteer on their website below or give them a call at (218) 820-7454. Signing up to volunteer is a simple process. Start by completing your basic information (name, address, contact info.), have a valid driver’s license, complete a simple

background check, and tell IFV your preferred volunteer schedule. Interfaith Volunteers will take it from there and begin matching you with people in need in your community. This partnership between *Crosslake Cares* and Interfaith Volunteers is about more than solving Crosslake’s transportation challenges, it’s about building a stronger, more connected community.

Each year, *Crosslake Cares* strives to enhance the lives of seniors in Crosslake, and addressing transportation needs is a vital step in that mission. Join us in this effort because every ride counts.

**Due to our joint marketing efforts over the past year, we have added 18 new volunteers who are serving the Crosslake community. We are currently serving about 31 clients with YOUR help!**





Ann Silgen,  
Executive Director  
Interfaith Volunteers  
[www.interfaithvolunteers.org](http://www.interfaithvolunteers.org)  
(218) 820-7454



# LOCAL SUPPORT FROM ASPIRE INSURANCE SERVICES

Whether you are nearing age 65, managing a local business, or looking to retire early, navigating the insurance landscape is a major life transition. At Aspire Insurance Services, founder Brenda Weitalla and business partner, Tina Gallant-Daiker treat their clients like family, offering no-cost, individualized support to bridge the gap between today's needs and tomorrow's security.

**Special Support for the Journey Ahead**  
The hardest part of insurance is often just knowing where to start. At Aspire Insurance Services, we offer specialized support for those in



524 S. 6th St, Brainerd, MN  
[www.AspireInsuranceServices.com](http://www.AspireInsuranceServices.com)

the beginning processes of their search. Whether you are just starting to research your options or you've just received your first "Welcome to Medicare" packet, we provide a "hand-holding" experience. We sit down with you to organize the paperwork, explain the timelines, and ensure you never feel overwhelmed by the process. Many people hope to retire before age 65, but health insurance costs are often the biggest hurdle. Aspire offers unique experience and specialized support for early retirees. Brenda and Tina help clients navigate the under 65 marketplace to see if they qualify for subsidies or tax credits that can make early retirement a financial reality.

- **Group Health Insurance:** We help local companies protect their teams with comprehensive packages that attract top talent while protecting the bottom line.
- **Medicare Mastery:** Once retirement arrives, we help seniors compare Advantage and Supplement plans side-by-side to find the right plan to fit their specific needs.
- **Final Expense Insurance:** To protect a family's legacy, we provide simple life insurance policies to cover funeral costs. These plans ensure that your loved ones can focus on healing rather than the financial burden of end-of-life expenses.

**Meet Your Advocates: Brenda & Tina**  
Brenda Weitalla has 38 years of experience in the insurance industry since 1988. Raised in Central Minnesota, she specializes in Medicare, MNsure, and Group Insurance. Brenda "Aspires" every day to be better than the day before, and to provide her clients with clarity and honest guidance based on decades of professional knowledge.



*Brenda Weitalla: (218) 839-8584 | [Brendaw@aspireinsuranceservices.com](mailto:Brendaw@aspireinsuranceservices.com)*  
Tina Gallant-Daiker is a hometown professional dedicated to community education. After navigating complex care for her own family, Tina was inspired to help others unscramble the Medicare journey. Mentored by Brenda, Tina combines her personal passion for family care with high-level industry training to provide clients with a supportive, expert experience they can truly trust.



*Tina Gallant-Daiker: (218) 831-3641 | [Tinad@aspireinsuranceservices.com](mailto:Tinad@aspireinsuranceservices.com)*

# SAY HELLO TO THE POSSIBILITIES AT GOOD SAMARITAN SENIOR LIVING

Choosing a senior living community is an important decision—one that often follows a major life event, such as a fall or surgery, or simply the desire for a lifestyle change. Whatever the reason, we understand that taking this step can feel overwhelming. That's why at Good Samaritan, we're here to make the transition easier and more reassuring.

For more than 100 years, Good Samaritan has been dedicated to providing high-quality care to seniors across America's heartland. As the nation's largest nonprofit provider of senior care and services, we proudly serve communities where over 70% of our residents live in rural areas. Our mission is simple: to create a place where seniors feel safe, supported, and truly at home.

At our Good Samaritan Senior Living communities, residents enjoy a fulfilling, maintenance-free lifestyle surrounded by caring neighbors and compassionate staff. We offer four locations in the Brainerd/Pine River area:

- **Bethany in Brainerd**
- **Woodland in Brainerd**
- **Riverside Independent Senior Living**
- **Riverside Assisted Living in Pine River**



Each community is designed to provide comfort, connection, and peace of mind. Whether you're an avid bird-watcher who dreams of a feeder outside your window or someone who loves curling up with a good book in your favorite chair, we believe senior living should feel like home.

**Supportive Services**  
For those who need extra help with daily activities—whether short-term or long-term—our Woodland, Bethany, and Riverside Assisted Living communities offer personalized care and services tailored to individual needs.

Senior living is more than a place to live. It's a community where friendships flourish, independence is respected, and every resident is treated with dignity. One family recently shared this heartfelt message about their experience at our Woodland community: "It is hard to put into words what your community meant to my mother.

From the moment she arrived, she was welcomed, included, and treated as part of a family. The staff cared for my mother with a level of kindness and patience that went far beyond duty. You learned her interests, respected her independence, and always treated her with dignity. She felt genuinely cared for, and we felt it too—every conversation, every small kindness, every moment of reassurance mattered more than you may ever know."

**Plan Ahead for Peace of Mind**  
It's never too early to start planning for your future. Even if you don't need senior living services today, exploring your options now can help you avoid making decisions during a stressful time. Planning ahead ensures you're prepared when the time is right.

**Ready to learn more?**  
Call Becky, our Good Samaritan Senior Living Specialist, at (218) 855-6616 to schedule a tour. Discover how we can help you or your loved one live life to the fullest—because at Good Samaritan, we believe every day should feel like home.

*Becky Bohnenstingl  
Senior Living Sales Specialist  
Good Samaritan Bethany & Woodland  
[www.good-sam.com](http://www.good-sam.com)*





SENIOR BINGO

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM



Legion's license  
#00997

Join us at Crosslake-Fifty Lakes  
American Legion on Hwy 3, Crosslake.

SENIOR TRIVIA

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM



Join us at Moonlite Bay for Trivia Night,  
with discounts on food and beverage.  
Fun and Prizes!

SENIOR PROM

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2026  
5:30 PM - 10:00 PM



Sponsored by the  
Crosslake Ideal  
Lions

Join us at Manhattan Beach Lodge.  
Call early to make your reservation,  
seating limited (218) 692-3381

WATCH FOR FULL DETAILS OF THE 2026 SENIOR DAYS & EXPO  
on our website and our next Newsletter in April

ROAR LIKE A LION

The living mantra of the Lions throughout the world is "We Serve". We sponsor service events such as Lions Kidsight Screening at the Minnesota State Fair, County Fairs, Schools and other events. The Crosslake Lions conduct two yearly blood drives, and this year sponsored the Crosslake Community School in the Outreach Meal Packaging Program to stock local food shelves. Over 30 of our sponsored students in Robotics and Trap teams from Crosslake Community and Pequot schools helped us with our yearly Roadside Clean up followed up with complimentary pizza and refreshments at Zorbaz.



Our contributions, to name a few, were provided to the Crosslake Fire Department, Camp Knutson, the Crosslake Food Shelf, Wounded Warriors, Shriners, PAL, Knights of Columbus, WAPOA

along with Local School Track & Field - Trap - Hockey and Robotics teams. We provided Sponsorship of the fun Camp Spooktacular at the Army Corps of Engineers, the Senior Expo, ACE Hardware Crosslake Days Band, as well as were participants in the St. Patty's Day Parade. This year fun events will continue with our *Music in The Square* as well as the *Peaches Sale* and *Lions Fishing Contest*.

When humanitarian emergencies strike, we as Lions, are ready to help and right beside us is Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF). This past year, our Club donated 18,000.00 dollars to LCIF in support of our eight dedicated pillars- Disaster Relief, Childhood Cancer, Humanitarian, Vision, Youth, Diabetes, Hunger, and Environment. Service is our expression of appreciation for our Lakes community, and for those living in our community. Whether we are stocking food shelves, supporting youth, safeguarding the environment, or assisting in all things vision and hearing, we do so with a spirit of gratitude and thanks that defines who we are.



As we prepare for a new year of service, may we continue to lead with grateful hearts, recognizing the volunteers who give tirelessly as well as the partners who make our impact stronger and the communities that welcome our efforts with open arms.

As always, we invite you to join us and share in this journey - "Together We Can"! The Crosslake Ideal Lions Club meet monthly, every second Wednesday at Maucieri's Restaurant in Crosslake. The Social Hour begins at 5:30 PM and General Meeting begins at 6:00 PM. Many members arrive early for added fellowship. We have speakers from different local enterprises along with Lion speakers specializing in one of our Eight Pillars.

For more information, please contact us at Crosslake Ideal Lions online at [info@crosslakeideallions.org](mailto:info@crosslakeideallions.org) or come to a meeting and find out more about the club. Hope to see you soon. Lions continue to Serve!

Kim Walesheck,  
Secretary of Crosslake Ideal Lions

ICE CREAM COULD WAIT  
-DOUG'S HEART COULDN'T

Doug Rach, former Breezy Point mayor, felt something was off. He and his wife, Billie Jo, decided to make a quick trip to the ER for peace of mind before grabbing ice cream. That quick trip turned into a helicopter flight to CentraCare - St. Cloud Hospital.

En route, Doug coded multiple times and was placed on a LUCAS CPR machine, which performed chest compressions for 40 minutes. Doug arrived at the hospital in cardiac arrest. From there, CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center Cardiologist Brian Stegman, MD, opened a completely blocked artery and another severely narrowed one, using an Impella heart pump to maintain blood flow. After the procedure, the heart pump allowed Doug's heart to rest and recover while his body temperature was carefully controlled to protect his brain. When Doug awoke from a medically induced coma, everyone was

relieved — he had no neurological damage.

During his 19-day stay, CentraCare staff provided comfort and support. The family even celebrated Thanksgiving near Doug's room and stayed at the Gorecki Guest House. "The staff made us feel like family," said Billie Jo.

After discharge, Doug began cardiac rehab. Today, he enjoys cooking for Billie Jo, caring for his horses, fishing and spending time with their children and grandchildren. "I'm grateful for life's small moments," he said.

Doug continues follow-up care at CentraCare - Baxter Clinic, which provides access to the advanced heart care, specialists and clinical trials at CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center. His doctors communicate closely, and he now sees Dr. Stegman or Rebecca Wirtz, APRN, CNP, annually. "They're always available if I need them," Doug said. "Being part of Doug's case is humbling," said Dr. Stegman. "Knowing that I helped him get back to cherishing life with his

loved ones is truly amazing." Doug recommends CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center and would recommend their services "in a heartbeat." And from time to time, he'll celebrate with an ice cream treat.

Visit [centracare.com](http://centracare.com) for more information about CentraCare Heart & Vascular services near you.



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