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Back to Basics: What is an Area Agency on Aging?



Weld County Area Agency on Aging
Assistance • Advocacy • Answers on Aging

We are thrilled and excited to bring our quarterly newsletter into the 21st century! Hopefully, you notice there is a new look to our Senior Solutions newsletter. With this inaugural "event," we would like to remind our readers what an Area Agency on Aging is, and how we help older adults and their caregivers.

In 1965, President Johnson passed the Older Americans Act (OAA) with the goal of supporting older Americans to live at home and in the community with dignity and independence for as long as possible. The Older Americans Act is actually 2 weeks *older* than Medicare and Medicaid! Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) were added to the Act in 1973 to be the "on-the-ground" organizations charged with carrying out the core mission of the OAA to plan and deliver home and community-based services and supports for vulnerable older adults.

Today, there are over 620 AAAs that make up the national Aging Network that serves millions of older adults and caregivers in every community in the country. In Colorado, there are 16 AAAs. Each is responsible for a geographic area that is either a single county or a multi-county district. The Weld County Area Agency on Aging is part of Weld County Government, resides under the Department of Human Services, and only serves residents living in Weld County.

The Weld County Area Agency on Aging is a little unique compared to our fellow Colorado AAAs. Not only does our office manage and coordinate the Older Americans Act programs, but we also administer the Options for Long-Term Care Medicaid programs, as well as Adult Protective Services.

So, what are the programs we coordinate? There are five core services under the OAA: Nutrition, Caregiver Support, Information and Referral, Health and Wellness, Supportive Services and Elder Rights. Some of the programs we offer are administered internally with staff, and some are contracted with community partners. Learn more about our Weld County programs [here](#).

Caregiver Corner: Be Kind to Yourself

By Jillian Broce



Calling all family caregivers for a celebration to relax, refresh and enjoy! Join other family caregivers at the Annual Caregiver Appreciation Day on February 15, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Hosted at the Greeley Active Adult Center on 1010 6th Street in Greeley, this FREE event will include a continental breakfast and catered lunch. A guest speaker and a caregiver panel will share their caregiver journeys. Guests will have an opportunity to enjoy themselves with an array of pampering stations including massages, Reiki, pet therapist, essential oils and yoga. Area caregiving resources will also be in attendance. Please RSVP by February 8, 2019, to the Greeley Active Adult Center by calling (970) 350-9440. No onsite respite will be provided, but please call (970) 400-6130 for more information regarding respite services. Please, no professional caregivers.

The National Family Caregiver Alliance estimates that about 34.2 million caregivers have provided unpaid informal care to adults age 50 years or older in the last 12 months. About half of these caregivers are caring for someone who has Alzheimer's Disease or other dementia. AARP reported that in 2013, unpaid caregiving totaled \$470 billion, which exceeded the value of paid home care and total Medicaid spending in the same year, and nearly matched the value of the sales of the world's largest company, Wal-Mart (\$477 billion.) Caregivers spend, on average, 24.4 hours per week providing care, but as many as 1 in 4 caregivers spend 40+ hours each week caring for a loved one. Often, caregiving is an unnoticed role. This is a day for you to be celebrated! Don't let yourself go unnoticed.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Workshop



If you are caring for a loved one at home, this workshop will help you learn to reduce stress, guilt and anger; relaxation techniques; set goals and problem-solve (family caregivers only). Workshop meets once a week for six weeks. FREE, but registration is required by calling (970) 400-6130.

This workshop meets at the Greeley Medical Clinic on Tuesdays, 1/15/19 to 2/19/19, from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Learn more about Weld Aging Well workshops and classes [here](#).

You Have the Power to Prevent Falls

By Whitney Janzen-Pankratz

Did you know that 1 in 4 Americans aged 65+ fall every year? Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans. Across the country, falls result in more than 2.8 million injuries treated in emergency departments annually, including over 800,000 hospitalizations and more than 27,000 deaths. Falls are costly—in medical expenses and in quality of life. A growing number of older adults fear falling, and consequently limit their activities and social engagements. This can result in further physical decline, depression, social isolation and feelings of helplessness.



However, falling is not an inevitable part of aging. Through practical lifestyle adjustments, evidence-based programs and community partnerships, the number of falls among older adults can be reduced substantially.

Discover ways to reduce the fear of falling and break the fear of falling cycle by increasing activity levels by attending the A Matter of Balance workshop. The program focuses on practical coping strategies. A variety of activities address physical, social and cognitive factors affecting fear of falling. This workshop meets once a week for 8 weeks. FREE to people 60 and older, but registration is required. To register, call (970) 400-6117.

There are two upcoming workshops to choose from: Mondays, February 4 through March 25, 2019, at North Colorado Medical Center or Wednesdays, January 23 through March 13, 2019, at the Milliken Senior Center.

Learn more about Weld Aging Well workshops and classes [here](#).

Friendly Fork, Weld County Senior Nutrition Program



Adequate nutrition is essential to staying active and maintaining a healthy lifestyle as we age. To enhance the dietary intake of Weld County seniors, the Friendly Fork provides tasty and nutritious lunches in a variety of warm and friendly group settings throughout the County. Currently, we offer 37 meals which are spread out among 23 sites 5 days a week. All of the meals meet 1/3 of the daily recommended dietary allowance and include flavorful items such as lasagna, chicken and dumplings, hamburgers, various fruits and vegetables as well as an assortment of dinner rolls, muffins, cookies and fruit crisps.

The Friendly Fork additionally provides meal participants with the opportunity to socialize and interact with others while enjoying a well-balanced meal. This allows many seniors to avoid isolation, maintain their independence and form new friendships.

Social and educational opportunities are also available before and after meals. Guest speakers, musicians and impersonators are quite popular among several sites. Educational classes cover a range of topics including nutrition, health, fraud and tax assistance. Lorrie, the Registered Dietitian, is also available for nutrition counseling on a variety of nutrition topics to registered participants of the Friendly Fork at no cost to the participant.

It is the true dedication, commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers that keeps the Friendly Fork going strong. Each of our annually trained volunteers willingly donate their time and effort in helping to welcome others, serve meals, assist with paperwork, clean up and encourage social interaction among the tables of meal participants.

All in all, it is our mission to continue providing nutritional, social and educational services to the seniors of Weld County while additionally connecting them to supportive services that promote independence and self sufficiency.

A complete listing of the 23 Weld County Friendly Fork meals sites and the days of service can be found [here](#). For additional information, please contact Meredith Skoglund at (970) 400-6132 or mskoglund@weldgov.com.

AAA Employee Retires After 73 Years in the Workforce

With an employment history spanning more than seven decades, Helen Clark is retiring from Weld County. But don't call her tired!



Employed full-time since she was 16 years old, Helen's drive to succeed is the stuff of legends. She began her career as a waitress in 1945, then worked for a laundromat, grocery store, the U.S. Census Bureau, Hewlett-Packard and Electronic Fab Technology Corp. husband taking off for three years to care for her husband. After his passing, Helen, at 70, decided to go back to work. "I knew there would be things I'd have to learn, but I was determined to do a good job," she recalled.

Helen joined an employment agency that placed her with the Weld County Department of Human Services (DHS) in 1999. Beginning in the Fiscal Department then working her way to Administrative Assistant in the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), her daily duties were ones she truly enjoyed. In fact, if you've ever called AAA in the past, you were most likely greeted by Helen, as the main number rang directly to her desk. Besides answering phone calls, she also worked with Friendly Fork, Weld County's Senior Nutrition Program, in addition to other tasks.

Now, at 89, Helen says she's finally ready to take some time for herself. "I have no regrets on retiring; it just seems like something I need to do," she said. "I've enjoyed my time here and being able to help others, but now I'm looking forward to enjoying my family and what's around me."

At her retirement recognition, Weld County Commissioner Mike Freeman, coordinator for DHS, said, "We thank and congratulate Helen on a lifetime of achievement and a very well-deserved retirement. We wish you the best on your years to come!"

When asked to share some final words of wisdom to help others succeed, Helen said, "Apply yourself, do your best and don't give up. And you're never too old to learn."

To learn more, visit our [website](#).