

CARE Connections

September 2020
Volume 17, Issue 3

Letter from the Director

by *Connie Cardinal*



We can all agree, the first half of the year presented our community and country with many new challenges. We all learned how to social distance and wear colorful masks when going out in public. COVID-19 challenges also effected service delivery for our seniors and our annual fundraising activities. CARE quickly responded to the needs of seniors by providing additional grocery delivery services to help high risk seniors to remain living safely and independently in their homes. CARE assisted seniors needing essential rides to dialysis and chemotherapy get to their appointments.

We experienced shortages; toilet tissue, cleaners, Clorox wipes and meat became scarce. CARE purchased much needed items for seniors unable to go out, and continues to do so because some shortages still exist and change frequently in the grocery stores. One thing we can all agree on is our lives have definitely changed. I'm hoping it makes us all a little kinder and more tolerable of others.

CARE-Community Action Respecting Elders has been working with local farmers, such as Svihel Vegetable Farm and Stoney Brook Farm, to help get free fresh produce out in our area, and I would like to thank both of them for their generosity. CARE also partnered with the C.R.O.S.S. Center and Second Harvest Heartland to provide fresh produce, dairy products and meat items to residents in Benton County. We have set up a food distribution location at CARE where participants can safely receive their food packages while staying in their vehicles. CARE volunteers are also busy delivering to homebound clients and to

Editor's Notes

by *Gini Kalton*



What a year it has been so far!
Some days we don't know
whether to laugh or cry.
But we are still here.

I make a conscious choice to laugh because I believe there are only two things for me to worry about: that over which I have control, and that over which I do not have control. If I have control, what is there for me to worry about? And if I do not have control, what would be the point of worrying about it?

Looking for the silver lining can be difficult in a year such as this; but there has been so much to be grateful for, so much to consider, and so much to give. In this issue you will see the grand generosity of all the people you know and love, from the folks in the towns and the folks in the countryside.

So I suggest we make this holiday season as warm and inviting as it has traditionally been, using the creative ingenuity we have, and what we inherited from our parents and grandparents. We can make this another memorable year, filled with happiness, hope and love.

Whether you are grieving the loss of a loved one, celebrating the birth of a loved one, or praying you don't murder a loved one, asking the simple question, "How can I help?" will lift your spirits as it lifts the spirits of those you ask. Go on, give it a whirl!

Happy Hallogivingmas!

Gini

CARE

Community Action Respecting Elders

OFFICE HOURS:

MON - THURS
8:00 am - 3:00 pm

LOCATION:

321 6th Avenue
Foley, MN

MAILING ADDRESS:

PO Box 65
Foley, MN 56329

Email:

info@CAREelders.org

Web site:

www.CAREelders.org

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*the public is welcome to attend our board meetings on the third Tuesday of every month at 5pm in the CARE office.

From the Director

... continued from page one

senior apartment complexes. Over 60 tons of food have been distributed in our community since April.

We have been blessed with numerous donations (such as meat, butter, eggs, personal care items and more) from generous individuals wanting to help. I could never have imagined a lack of toilet paper on the shelves of stores. Getting these items into the hand of those in need was very pressing.

So many wonderful people and organizations came out to support the CARE program. I would like to thank all of you; the Benton County Commissioners for additional funding and for providing a location to distribute food; Foley Public Works for the use of their trailer and forklift, and the Foley Police for safely directing traffic.

I would like to give a special thanks to all of the CARE volunteers and Foley School volunteers who helped at our food distribution, burger & brat booth and the shabby chic boutique. We tried to conduct events safely while recovering a portion of lost fundraising revenue. There is no way this could happen without our dedicated volunteers.

I have no words to express my gratitude to all the businesses, organizations and individuals who sent donations during our COVID-19 appeal campaign. To date, CARE has received over \$10,000 in donations. This is so important because CARE will lose over \$36,000 in cancelled fundraising activities this year.

We have received additional grant funding from Central Minnesota Council on Aging, Benton County, Second Harvest Heartland, Foley Area Chamber of Commerce, and Foley Community Foundation. And thanks to Frandsen Bank and Trust for their assistance with the Payroll Protection Plan. All of you made it possible for CARE to continue serving seniors and respond to families of all ages since the beginning of the pandemic. As many of us search for what our new normal will be, high risk seniors will still need our help and CARE is committed to be there now and in the uncertain future months ahead. God bless all of you for your generosity and kind wishes.



WHY DO I VOLUNTEER? by Karen Cross

Janice and Delroy Kraemer have been helping CARE distribute produce to the public. If you have been to CARE to get produce, chances are you have met the Kraemers. They are members of the Duelm Lions Club and help us out often.

Last month they showed up with piles of sweetcorn and squash to share with the public. They live in a house in the country where they raised three children who are all grown up and married now. They also have two grandchildren and two great grandchildren to brag about.

Janice spends her free time reading, doing puzzles, and gardening, while Delroy likes to attend car shows and auctions, or go deer hunting. They volunteer because they enjoy meeting people and want to help people who need help. Many people stopping by CARE for food have thanked them, and nothing makes them feel better than happy, grateful people accepting food to take home to their families!



Janice & Delroy Kraemer joined CARE volunteers and helped load produce, distributed free to Benton County residents of all ages.



TELEPHONE PIONEERS MATCH DONATION

Dave Hemmer, President of the Central Council of Telephone Pioneers, presented a \$600 donation to Connie Cardinal, Executive Director of CARE on August 24th. The donation was made possible by a match program between Dave's group and St. Cloud residents Debbie and Mike Lechner.

The Letchners have made it part of their daily walks to pick up cans and recycle them into cash to donate to organizations in small towns like Foley because,

“ . . . it seems like they are always missed in the shuffle,” Debbie told the Benton County News. (Read the full article by Jakob Kounkel in the September 1, 2020 issue, Volume 90, Number 36)





SECOND HARVEST HEARTLAND SUMMER FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Once each month, Second Harvest Heartland sends two semi-trucks with boxes of fruits & vegetables, boxes of frozen meats, and boxes of assorted dairy products. This food is distributed free to Benton County residents of all ages. Each household may have up to two sets of 3 boxes by giving the ages and number of persons in the household.

Volunteers include members of the Duelm Lions Club, Foley Public Schools athletic students and coaches, CARE Board and staff and their family members, and AmeriCorps Vista Volunteers.

Jennifer Scheida, Communications Specialist with Second Harvest came for the annual visit to see our setup and how we do things at CARE. Jennifer was amazed by the effectiveness of the CARE program, and expressed a desire to do more and so this extended program was initiated.

CARE staff and Board are very grateful for the cash donations received from grateful participants throughout the day during these distributions.



JUNE 15TH

JULY 14TH



AUGUST 11TH





SUMMER BURGERS N' BRATS

Volunteers of all ages came together to serve the public at the CARE Burgers n' Brats 'Drive-In' booth on Wednesdays in July and August. This event was the brain child of our director, Connie, who asked for a committee to make the magic happen. Loss of revenue from fundraisers was foremost on her mind as COVID stopped all activities for spring and summer, so she inspired the Board and many volunteers to try something new. Generous customers made this event a success with a net of more than \$5,000 in sales and donations!

Community members as far away as St. Cloud, Milaca, and Elk River donated supplies when staff and committee members called, and volunteers offered to work multiple shifts. Everyone reported having a wonderful time. Getting out into the community and greeting the public helped us all with our feelings of isolation.

Our deep gratitude goes out to Distinctive Cabinet Design and the owners of Koch Hardware for the very generous donation of a grill, propane tank, and storage cover. Beaudry Oil & Propane of Elk River donated 6 additional tanks of propane, and both Culligan and Bernick's of St. Cloud donated bottled water. Many of the donors listed in this quarters 'In-Kind' donations contributed to this event. Thank you, every one!



SHABBY CHIC CARE BOUTIQUE

A new fundraising event this summer that was a fun experience, and became a huge success! CARE staff and volunteers worked hard to price and stage items into a wonderful presentation! We had gently used clothing, home décor, books, jewelry, collectables and baked goods. This event raised \$2,085 which will help CARE to support seniors in Benton County.

Thanks to all the donors, to our volunteers for their hard work and commitment, and thanks to the shoppers who came out in support during this event!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

In past years, CARE has annually showcased the spirit of volunteerism with a dinner to honor the hard work and commitment of our program volunteers. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for social distancing, CARE was challenged on how to thank all of our wonderful volunteers who so bravely risked themselves to help others. So the CARE Board Members and staff put their heads together to create a Drive-In appreciation event at the CARE office on September 22nd. Board members and staff cooked burgers and brats and presented each volunteer with a bagged meal and a gift as they drove up to receive their dinners.



In the past twelve months our volunteers have donated over *5,200 hours* to the assistance of our senior clients, both with direct and support services.

From the Board of Directors and Staff at CARE, our deep gratitude and thanks to each and every one of you for giving of your time and talents, and for your continuing dedication and willingness to help seniors. Your generosity of spirit is needed now more than ever before. ***Thank you!***



ANNUAL VOLUNTEER DRIVER TRAINING & REVIEW

CARE's annual driver's training will be held on October 6th at 10:00 am with a second training on October 15th at 1:00 pm. Drivers are asked to sign up in advance for **one** of these dates, and to arrive a few minutes early to sign in and find a seat. If you are unable to attend training on either of these dates, please contact Karen at the CARE office to make alternative arrangements. If you are not currently a volunteer driver, but are interested in becoming one, please call and schedule one of these days and times; you will be able to fill out your application at this time.

On the day of the training you will be asked to provide:

- ◆ **Valid driver's license**
- ◆ **Proof of insurance**
- ◆ **Physician's name, address and telephone number.**

Benton County Sheriff's Department and local volunteers will be on site each day to perform free vehicle inspections. Important safety topics will be covered and you will receive supplies to ensure both your safety and the safety of the clients you serve.



It is the goal of the CARE Program to provide a safe environment for seniors, who are designated as high risk, vulnerable adults by the State of Minnesota at this time, and to ensure your safety as a volunteer driver while providing essential services.

Thank you very much for your cooperation, and for sharing the CARE mission to support seniors to remain safely and independently in the home of their choice.



VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND EYE DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS; GROCERY SHOPPING; ESSENTIAL PERSONAL CARE ITEMS AND MEDICATION PICK UP AND DELIVERY

Seniors are able to remain independently in their homes because our volunteers provide these essential services, which are especially crucial at this time.

You may be asked to provide a ride, or to provide a service that includes shopping and delivery to the senior's home. Please call 320-968-7848 to sign up, or go to our website at CAREelders.org to fill out your application. We look forward to working with you!

Thank you for helping us take care of those who once took care of you!



FALL AND WINTER YARDWORK

CARE offers assistance to seniors requesting fall yard cleanup and/or winter snow shoveling.

Are you part of a group (including family members) who would be willing to offer assistance to a senior in your community? Our clients have expressed their trust in, and deep gratitude for the adult and youth volunteers who have helped them in the past.

Please call and ask how you can help this fall and/or winter. And if you are a senior, or know of a senior, who would like some assistance with these chores this fall and winter, please call and ask us to add you to our list.

320-968-7848



FRIENDLY PHONE CALLS

This service helps seniors with the feelings of isolation that have increased since early spring when physical and social distancing became necessary for their health and safety.

Many seniors and their volunteers have found new friendships through this connection, and seniors have expressed their gratitude to the volunteers who are lifting their spirits!

Call 320-968-7848 and ask us to match you with an isolated senior.





CENTRAL MINNESOTA COUNCIL ON AGING GRANT

CARE-Community Action Respecting Elders received \$9,900 dollars in grant funding from the Central MN Council on Aging in response to the COVID19 pandemic in Benton County.

Benton County has been identified as an area experiencing food insecurities for people ages 18 to 64. With this grant funding CARE purchased supplies such as a freezer and coolers to store food safely, and personal protective equipment (masks, sanitizers and gloves to help stop the spread of COVID-19), as required for our staff and volunteers. This funding also helped with extended staff time that was necessary to meet our commitment to the distribution of food (over 60 tons to date) to Benton County residents, and for scheduling and delivery of groceries and medications for our seniors requiring essential services. Some funds were also used to purchase gas cards for our volunteer drivers who use their own vehicles and fuel to deliver to homebound clients. Their dedication is noteworthy during this tough time.

The CARE Board of Directors and staff are grateful for our partnership with the Central MN Council on Aging; with their support we can continue to assist high risk seniors to remain safely in their homes throughout Benton County.



PEARLS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO PROVIDE FREE ASSISTANCE

CARE remains in partnership with the Jewish Family Services of St. Paul to offer the 'Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives' (PEARLS) to rural seniors of all faiths. This program is a free, short-term counseling/life coaching evidenced-based protocol specifically designed for older adults dealing with low mood or depression. The PEARLS program was researched and developed at the University of Washington in Seattle where research discovered that 'behavioral activation' may be as effective as 'cognitive behavioral therapy' in treating depression.

Here are a few statements from seniors who have participated in the program:

"I had no idea what was to take place, so it was a surprise. I shared my bucket list and goals. Not knowing what was really going to take place, I am so grateful [the PEARLS coordinator] was put in my life."

"I know that I've been very depressed for a long time, and I didn't think anyone could help me. I was very wrong. The good Lord sent me [the PEARLS counselor] and put me in touch with [a therapist]."

"The depression test [the PEARLS Counselor] had me do dropped from "10" to "2". I am so much better. I don't know how she did it"

PEARLS counselors will meet with adults 55 and older in their homes for a one-time assessment, and qualified candidates will be loaned an easy to use iPad to be used for sessions with a counselor. If you are a senior 55 or older, or caretaker to a senior 55 or older experiencing low mood or depression, please contact Connie (320-968-7848) at CARE to receive additional information or to set up an appointment for enrollment.

Please know you are not alone, help is only a phone call away.



Safety for Seniors

by Troy Heck, Benton County Sheriff



I'm going to open with a statement that likely feels uncomfortable to many people reading this column. That statement is: in today's world you must assume that people who contact you unexpectedly, regardless of the reason(s) they give, are up to no good. Criminals are constantly trying to scam people out of money or personal information. These scam artists may approach you in an email, telephone call, text message, or letter. These criminals will offer up many different and ever-changing lies designed to create just enough doubt to get you to give up your money or personal information. These lies usually involve a subject matter that would be important to the intended victim. For instance, the criminal might claim that a person's social security number was stolen and that the victim's social security payments will be ended if they don't cooperate. The victim might be told their grandchild is in some jeopardy (in jail, or an accident, or sick with COVID) and in need of money, or that there is a warrant for the victim's arrest that must be satisfied immediately. These lies are constantly changing, and trying to keep up to date with the newest lie is very much like playing the whack-a-mole game.

The best defense a senior, or anyone else, can employ against these criminals is a healthy dose of suspicion in any unexpected phone call, email, or other correspondence. Legitimate government agencies, utilities, or companies should be respectful of your skepticism and allow you the option of verifying the reason for their contact. If the person talking to you starts to pressure you into acting immediately, you must assume they are a criminal trying to scam you. If you have any reason to believe the person contacting you unexpectedly is contacting you for a legitimate reason, ask this person the exact name of the agency or business they claim to represent. Advise the person that you will be researching how to contact their agency or business and ask for the person's name. From that point, you (or maybe someone you know that is handy with a Google search) need only to do some research online to find contact information for the purported agency or business and place a telephone call to the number you found. This procedure will allow you to get to the bottom of whether the person was a criminal or a legitimate employee.

The alternative to healthy skepticism can be heartbreaking and devastating financial loss to the victim. Far too often we speak to victims who are scammed out of thousands of dollars with no hope of getting their money back. Prevention is the best solution to scams, and spreading the message of prevention is equally important. Often victims in the process of giving away money to criminals are stopped by friends or family members who take the time to watch for signs of fraudulent activity. Unusual trips to a financial institution or the purchase of gift cards in bulk is very concerning and should be addressed. Discussion of prizes won or offers received that sound too good to be true should be closely scrutinized for any demands of payment in exchange for the prize or offer. An increased fear or apprehension in a friend or relative should be discussed to ensure their change in affect isn't due to threats from a scam artist. Talking to friends and relatives about scam prevention and any unusual activity you see is the best defense against these criminals.

The criminals perpetrating these scams are constantly changing their tactics to ensnare more victims. In order to keep yourself from becoming their next victim you must always be suspicious of people who contact you unexpectedly. If you weren't expecting that telephone call, email, or letter you must assume it is from a criminal until you can prove otherwise. It's not a very Minnesota nice way to treat strangers, but it is the safest way to deal with unexpected contact in our modern world.



Exercise for Elderly During COVID19

During COVID isolation, many elderly persons have been confined to their homes, assisted living, or nursing homes. To stay away from COVID, this confinement has increased the risk of physical decline in elderly persons. Repeated sitting can cause increased muscle wasting, a greater risk for falls, skin breakdown, and depression. Without the company of family and friends, many elderly do not have the motivation to exercise. Exercise classes have been halted in congregate settings and at senior centers.

Here are some suggestions to help you “get up and move.”

- ◆ If you are confined with family – make exercise a family/group event. Everyone get up and move at the same time (while social distancing from others outside your group). Work towards your individual ability.
- ◆ Use household chores to move your arms and legs if you are able.
- ◆ During commercial breaks from television, move your arms and legs to increase circulation.
- ◆ Chair yoga is a great way to relax from the COVID anxiety while exercising your body and mind.
- ◆ There are great cheap exercise DVDs for the elderly available. When I checked – there were several under \$15.
- ◆ While exercising, remember to deep breathe and be attuned to any change in discomfort.
- ◆ Try to get into a regular daily routine for exercise. Some people have more energy in the morning, while other people struggle in the morning and become energized in the evening. Use these peak energy times so exercise is not a “chore” but an enjoyable activity.
- ◆ Get outside every day if possible, while still social distancing. Be sure to use your walker or cane (if you usually use one) and walk with someone in case of slips or falls. Always take your cell phone or alert system with you. The fresh air revitalizes your body, mind, and soul. Walk to your ability. Even sitting on the porch is a welcome change from being indoors. Dress appropriately for the weather. With beautiful fall days ahead of us, without the heat and mosquitoes, Minnesotans have to take full advantage of these welcome days before winter.
- ◆ If isolated with family, have them take you on a car trip in the country to view the fall colors.

REMEMBER - before the start of any new exercise routine, check with your health care provider to determine if you have any restrictions.



CONTRIBUTORS - Donations received 6/16/2020 - 9/15/2020

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:



For grant funding that helps CARE support area seniors to remain living independently in the home of their choice.

Our sincere gratitude to all! We apologize if we missed your name. Please contact us so we can acknowledge you in our next newsletter. ***Thank you!***



HOW TO VOTE ABSENTEE IN NOVEMBER

Election day is Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Minnesota allows any voter to request a ballot by mail. Early voting is also allowed.

To receive an application for a ballot by mail, phone the Benton County Auditor-Treasurer's office at 320-968-5006; or go online to www.co.benton.mn.us/169/elections, where you will be able to fill out your ballot application and immediately submit it, or have a ballot application mailed to you.

Completed applications may be:

Mailed:

Benton County Elections
PO Box 129
Foley, MN 56329

Emailed:

elections@co.benton.mn.us

Delivered in person:

Office of Auditor-Treasurer
531 Dewey St
Foley, MN 56329.

When you receive your ballot by mail, follow the directions for filling it out carefully, and postmark or deliver your ballot in person no later than Monday, November 2, 2020. There is also a secure drop box to the right of the front door of the building where voters may drop off ballots.

Have Questions or Need Help?

Call Minnesota State office at 1-877-600-VOTE (8683), or

Benton County absentee voting contact:

Heather Bondhus

Phone: 320-968-5027

Fax: 320-968-5337

Email: elections@co.benton.mn.us



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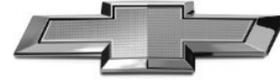
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It is the desire of the Board of Directors and
staff of CARE to spread cheer and uplift the
community we serve, while generating funds
to continue our mission of service to seniors.

To order your t-shirts,
please call **320-968-7848**

**This newsletter is also made possible
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AND FOLLOW THE SIGNS
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