

CARE Connections

March 2021
Volume 18, Issue 1

Letter from the Director

by *Connie Cardinal*



As the snow melts I can't wait to shed my heavy winter coat and enjoy the sunshine. It feels like a new beginning to me and especially this year in particular. It seems like most of us have been either working our tails off since the COVID-19 pandemic started or we have been isolated, lonely, and fearful to return to regular activities.

I am careful here, not to use the word normal as I am not sure what normal is, especially at this point in time. I'm so grateful we are receiving the vaccines and I am praying we can gather together soon. I know I am not meant to be alone. We have missed going to movies, out to dinner, gatherings with friend and family and numerous holiday events. The quarantine was necessary to keep many individuals, including seniors safe in their homes.

CARE provided grocery shopping, home deliveries of food, medication, and personal care items to help assist our home bound rural older adults. These services will continue when the pandemic ends. We realized many of these home delivery services were necessary prior to the pandemic, and will be needed moving forward. Over 122 tons of food were dispersed from the CARE location to assist people of all ages who were experiencing food insecurities. How thankful recipients have been to receive such an array of food during this time.

We at CARE are devoted to keep our partnerships strong with other organizations in order to continue to provide services to people in need in our community. This will not change. As people are

Editor's Notes

by *Gini Kalton*



Went for a walk in the pines over the weekend. Spring is in the air, if not on the ground, and the scents were intoxicating. My love and I walked over 3 miles, and though we were physically tired, we felt completely renewed.

This morning, as I greeted the sunrise, there were whole flocks of tiny Juncos in the yard, hopping through the old grass and gobbling up any seeds they found. And flocks of geese and sandhill cranes fly overhead calling to their mates, we assume they are looking for this year's nesting sites.

If snow should fly it will not last long because it's time is over, so we will see it as a pretty thing, if a bit inconvenient.

With renewal comes excitement and planning, and so CARE begins a new year of fundraising, and seeking new ways to enhance the lives of the seniors we serve.

This issue is filled with hope and opportunity; and you are invited to participate in whatever way brings joy into your heart.

We invite you to join us in serving seniors, whether your gift is financial or as a volunteer!

Blessings to you and your families,

Gini

CARE

Community Action Respecting Elders

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

LOCATION:
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Foley, MN

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*the public is welcome to attend board meetings on the second Thursday of every month at 5:30pm in the CARE office.

From the Director
... continued from page one

receiving the vaccine and COVID-19 restrictions are revised, I am busy planning social activities that we once enjoyed. We will keep you posted in our newsletter and on social media as guidelines change. Many of you enjoyed our exercise or art classes, and I, too, am looking forward to bring them back to you, along with some new program ideas.

Some of you may be reluctant to come out after being quarantined for so long. We have volunteers that would like to provide friendly visits by phone or in person to help you if you are feeling isolated or lonely. I assure you that CARE is committed to provide a safe environment for you.

What a joy it will be to join together in laughter and to simply enjoy one another's company. If you have any ideas of new programs you would be interested in, please let me know, as we are open to new ideas.

Until then, stay safe and enjoy the sunshine!

Connie

BECOME A VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBER!

As a member of the CARE Board of Directors, you will be instrumental in choosing the direction and scope of our program.

You will be working with other members, and partnering with our Executive Director, to assure the continued success of our mission: "We support area neighbors 60 years and older to continue living independently in the home of their choice through community volunteerism."

For more information please contact the
CARE office: 320-968-7848



WHY DO I VOLUNTEER? ACCESS RAMP FOR CARE CLIENT

Contributed by Pastor Al Jergenson (Retired)

Speaking as a past board member and volunteer who has been working on various CARE projects for some time, I find that retirement now offers me wonderful new and added chances to meet and serve the elderly in a community I have grown to love.

After living in Foley for 27 years, and then moving to St. Cloud in retirement, I've found that continued service in the Foley community has helped me stay in touch with many, and has served as a wonderful and rewarding opportunity to use my own talents and gifts to step up and pay forward to benefit so many who, through the years, have built the wonderful community in which we all live.



On Wednesday, February 3rd, a team of volunteers working on behalf of the CARE Program completed the building of a handicap access ramp for Eunice, a CARE client who faces upcoming surgery on both knees and both shoulders. The ramp will enable her to return from the hospital following her surgeries, and complete her recovery and physical therapy in her own home.

The ramp was a joint project whose contributors included the CARE Program, the First Presbyterian Church Mission Work Team, Home Depot of St. Cloud, and

3 volunteers – Doug Brinkman of rural Oak Park, Dave Koester of rural St. Joseph, and Pastor Al Jergenson of St. Cloud.

For years now, CARE-Community Action Respecting Elders has been at work linking community players and volunteers with seniors in our community who can benefit from a vast array of local talents and resources to address real needs, enabling those seniors to continue living in their own homes. During times like these, those kinds of linkages and partnerships provide blessings and benefits to everyone involved!

On behalf of the volunteer work team and all the participating partners, a big "Thank You!" for the opportunity to serve in this way! Sincerely, Pastor Al Jergenson (Retired).



BEP AWARDS ECONOMIC RELIEF TO CARE



On December 14, 2020, the Governor and the Legislature approved an economic relief package for Minnesota businesses that includes distributions for counties to provide grants to eligible local businesses and non-profits.

Benton County contracted With Benton Economic Partnership, Inc. to establish and administer a temporary program to provide economic relief in the form of grants to local businesses and non-profits adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Benton Economic Partnership distributed \$787,399 to 43 businesses and non-profits in February and March 2021. Businesses, Veteran Service Organizations and other nonprofits that have experienced significant financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic qualified.

On March 17, 2021, Amanda Othoudt, Executive Director of the Benton Economic Partnership presented Connie Cardinal, Executive Director of CARE-Community Action Respecting Elders, with a check for \$15,000!

The Board of Directors and Staff at CARE send our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the BEP for their generous support of our continuing mission to assist seniors in Benton County with services that make it possible for them to remain in the home of their choice.



CALLING ALL DRIVERS!

CARE will be conducting Annual Driver Training on Thursday, April 29th at 10:00 am, and again on Tuesday, May 4th at 1:00 pm, at the CARE office in Foley.

The State of Minnesota requires that CARE provide annual training to all of our volunteer drivers in order to provide transportation services to seniors, and we must show the State of Minnesota we are in compliance.

CARE staff and the Board of Directors are so appreciative of our volunteer drivers, who use their own vehicles and fuel to transport seniors safely to much needed medical and dental appointments. These volunteers also provide grocery shopping, medication pick up, and home delivery services for home bound clients. When seniors give up driving, it's important that they have an independent avenue to access transportation when family members are unable to help.

During annual training, drivers will be asked to update vehicle information, provide proof of vehicle insurance, and provide the name and phone number of their primary care physician or clinic. CARE will provide a vehicle inspection, and complete required background checks for each driver. Our utmost goal is to provide a safe environment for older adults using CARE services.

If you are a current volunteer driver, please make it your priority to be in attendance, plan ahead, and mark it down on your calendar today! Please bring your driver's license, proof of insurance and the name and number of your physician or clinic.

Transportation is the greatest need for seniors in Benton County and its surrounding areas served by the CARE Program. If you are interested in becoming a new volunteer driver, we will welcome hearing from you. Please contact Karen at the CARE office by calling 320-968-7848.



FOR A LAUGH

A dad is washing the car with his son.

After a moment, the son asks his father, "Do you think we could use a sponge instead?"





VOLUNTEER WITH CARE AT FOLEY FUN DAYS!

The Foley Civic Group has begun plans to celebrate Foley Fun Days this year, with guidelines from the CDC and Minnesota Health Department.

So, CARE is moving forward with plans for our annual Corn Dog Castle. You are welcome to join us in this celebration, and to show your support for our seniors by volunteering to serve in the CARE Corndog Castle! The dates for this year's event are shown below, and our booth will be open during the hours set by the Foley Civic Group.

If you would like to be a part of the fun, please contact CARE at 320-968-7848 to schedule the days and times that best fit your schedule.



VOLUNTEER FOR SPRING YARD & GARDEN PREPARATION

Spring has sprung! Time to clean up the yard and prepare garden and flower beds!

To help support seniors who love living in their homes, CARE is seeking volunteers to assist with spring yard cleanup. We invite organizations and individuals to contact us and sign up to help our seniors. Call us today at 320-968-7848!

And if you or someone you know is a senior, 60 years or over, and would appreciate assistance with your spring yardwork, call us to get your name on the list so we can locate and schedule volunteers to help you.



*No one cares how much you know,
until they know how much you care!*

WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT OUR

CORN DOG CASTLE

DURING



SERVING

CORN DOGS

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CARE
Community Action
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&
SILENT AUCTION**

JUNE 21ST, 22ND, & 23RD

OPENING DAILY 8:00 AM

AT THE ROC CENTER

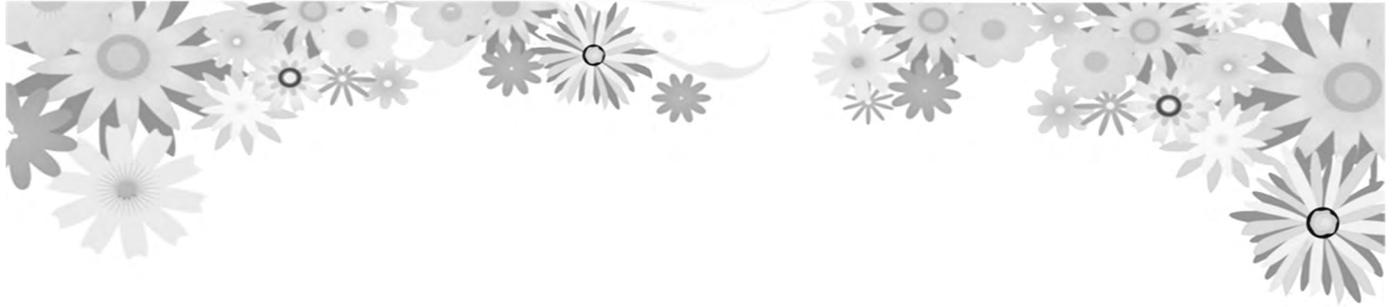
141 4th Avenue, Foley

**There will be fresh coffee &
baked goods for purchase.**

Come join us!



POP UP SALE & SILENT AUCTION - DONATIONS NEEDED



Please support the CARE program by donating a basket or items to sell at our Pop Up Sale and Silent Auction, being held at the ROC Center in downtown Foley June 21st, 22nd and 23rd.

Are you someone that enjoys wood working, jewelry making, or sewing?

We need you!

Are you a consultant with a home business such as Mary Kay, Pampered Chef, Thirty-One, Tastefully Simple or other?

We need you!

Do you enjoy putting themed silent auction baskets together?

We need you!

Donations are being accepted by our staff Monday thru Thursday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Please bring your donations to the CARE office located at 321 6th Ave., Foley, by May 30th.

Your generous donations are tax deductible, greatly appreciated, and will help us make this event a huge success!





Safety for Seniors - Theft Prevention

by Troy Heck, Benton County Sheriff



For as long as people have had things of value, there have been a small number of other people who are willing to take those things of value for their own.

Theft continues to be one of the five most often reported crimes in Benton County. Theft is typically a crime of opportunity that happens when a criminal is presented with circumstances allowing him or her to easily take something of value for their own. Thieves sometimes target seniors out of a belief seniors have accumulated items of value or a belief seniors may be an easy target. There are only two ways to prevent theft from affecting your world. You can either chose to not own anything of value or do your level-best to make your items of value difficult to detect, access, and steal.

All too often, criminals acquire their ill-gotten goods because these items are on display for anyone to see. Because most people are honest and law-abiding, most people would think little of seeing valuables left in plain sight in a vehicle, antiques left outside in plain sight, or tools lying out in a pickup bed. To a criminal, these all represent an opportunity to further their criminal lifestyle. As you are going about your everyday life, do your best to evaluate each situation for the opportunity it presents to thieves. If you see opportunity, conceal or better secure property to remove the opportunity and send thieves elsewhere.

Once you've done your best to keep valuables out of sight, take a moment to make sure those valuables are locked up. Lock your vehicles, lock your homes, lock your outbuildings, and lock your trailers. Use whatever means you can to make it as difficult as possible to get into or at these valuables. For those who remember a time when a person's property was secure even though nothing was locked up, this is disappointing advice to hear and may be a difficult habit to develop. It may be inconvenient and sometimes seem unnecessary, but the more difficult you make it for the thief, the more likely the thief is to move on to an easier target.

Theft prevention technology has a place in your personal crime prevention strategy as well. Whether it is something low-tech like motion sensing outdoor lights and a trail camera or something more advanced like GPS trackers or a security/surveillance system, these technological advances can help prevent theft or assist in catching those responsible. The presence of security devices alone may be enough to convince a thief to move along. Having a clear and high-quality image of a suspect or suspect vehicle can be a quality lead in any theft investigation. High quality images combined with the crowd sourcing power of traditional media and social media has contributed to the solving of many recent cases.

Finally, consider that thieves need to have an environment free of detection in which to operate. If the thief believes someone will see him or her and call law enforcement, the thief is less likely to strike in that area. Forming neighborhood watch groups or calling law enforcement right away when you see suspicious activity deprives the thief of his or her preferred environment. Getting to know your neighbors and reporting suspicious behavior will pay dividends for everyone in the community.

Of course, the best time to put all this into practice is before a thief pays a visit. Take a few moments to consider how you might be able to better protect the things valued by you and your neighbor from those who would seize the opportunity to make them their own.



Keep Your Mind Active

Being intellectually engaged may benefit the brain. People who engage in personally meaningful activities, such as volunteering or hobbies, say they feel happier and healthier. Learning new skills may improve your thinking ability, too. For example, one study found that older adults who learned quilting or digital photography had more memory improvement than those who only socialized or did less cognitively demanding activities. Some of the research on engagement in activities such as music, theater, dance, and creative writing has shown promise for improving quality of life and well-being in older adults, from better memory and self-esteem to reduced stress and increased social interaction.

However, a recent, comprehensive report reviewing the design and findings of these and other studies did not find strong evidence that these types of activities have a lasting, beneficial effect on cognition. Additional research is needed, and in large numbers of diverse older adults, to be able to say definitively whether these activities may help reduce decline or maintain healthy cognition.

Lots of activities can keep your mind active. For example, read books and magazines. Play games. Take or teach a class. Learn a new skill or hobby. Work or volunteer. These types of mentally stimulating activities have not been proven to prevent serious cognitive impairment or Alzheimer's disease, but they can be fun! Plus, findings from observational studies suggest that some informal mentally stimulating activities, such as reading or playing games, may lower the risk of Alzheimer's related cognitive impairment and dementia.

Some scientists have argued that such activities may protect the brain by establishing "cognitive reserve." They may help the brain become more adaptable in some mental functions so it can compensate for age-related brain changes and health conditions that affect the brain.

Some types of cognitive training conducted in a research setting also seem to have benefits. For the Advanced Cognitive Training for Independent and Vital Elderly (ACTIVE) trial, healthy adults 65 and older participated in 10 sessions of memory training, reasoning training, or processing-speed training. The sessions improved participants' mental skills in the area in which they were trained with evidence suggesting these benefits persisted for two years.

Be wary of claims that playing certain computer and online games can improve your memory and other types of thinking as evidence to back up such claims is evolving. There is currently not enough evidence available to suggest that computer-based brain training applications offered commercially have the same impact on cognitive abilities as the ACTIVE study training. NIA and other organizations are supporting research to determine whether different types of cognitive training have lasting effects.

Source: www.nia.nih.gov



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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!***



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GIVING TO A FAVORITE
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WONDERFUL WAY TO
HONOR THEIR MEMORY.



CARE FOOD DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

CARE has been blessed to be able to provide healthy food choices for seniors all year long with the Nutrition Assistance for Seniors Program through the USDA every month. CARE volunteers are available to load boxes into vehicles, and to deliver to homebound clients. If you, or a senior you know, is interested in signing up for this program, please call our office for more information.



Sample of NAPS box items;
specific items vary each month

CARE's new partnership with Catholic Charities offers frozen meals, at no charge to seniors ages 60 years and older, distributed once per month from the CARE parking lot.

Participants have the option of choosing 10, 20, or 30 frozen meals each month, with CARE volunteers loading vehicles, and delivering to homebound clients.

So check your freezer for space, and call our office to register for your meals!



Free Food Distribution for Benton County Residents - final day will be Monday, April 19th from 11 am to 1 pm (or until all boxes have been given out). Each household will receive a variety of available foods, usually including meats, dairy and produce. Please do not call ahead, as office staff will not know in advance what will be delivered by Second Harvest Heartland.





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JUNE 21, 22, & 23
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NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME