

CARE Connections

September 2026
Volume 23, Issue 3

Letter from the Director

by Jen Kipka



We are entering yet another change of season—one filled with beautiful fall weather (or so we hope 😊), changing leaves, and that refreshing crispness in the air. Fall always seems to be a reminder that change can be a beautiful thing.

It's incredible to think that CARE began back in 2002, serving a 10-mile radius around Foley. Look at us now! Today, we provide services throughout Benton County and surrounding areas. Over the years, CARE has continued to change and grow as we respond to the ever-changing needs of older adults and families facing the challenges that can come with aging.

As I look toward the future, I'm excited about what the next season will bring for CARE. We are exploring new ways to serve and support aging adults in our community, including educational classes designed to provide practical knowledge, helpful resources, and tools that can help people remain healthy, connected, and independent in their own homes for as long as possible.

This time of year, you'll also likely find me in the stands at a football game, living my best life—surrounded by friends, family, and community members as I cheer on my kids and their teammates. There is something special about watching a team come together, with each person playing a part toward a common goal.

That same spirit of teamwork is something I see every day at CARE. Our staff, volunteers, donors, businesses, organizations, and community partners each play an important role in making CARE

Editor's Notes

by Gini Kalton



As we come to the end of summer and begin the season of celebrations, I hope you will all join me in celebrating the first anniversary of our new Executive Director, Jen Kipka! Her first year has been a wild ride, with many new changes in process, and many more coming in the next year.

How are you? How can we help you? These questions are the most important when it comes to supporting seniors to remain living the home of their choice. These are the questions the staff at CARE ask everyday, and the questions the Board of Directors focus on each year at our Strategic Planning meeting.

If there are elders in your community that need assistance, finding a volunteer is the first step. CARE welcomes volunteers of all ages, and we encourage families, organizations, and businesses to reach out and ask what they can do to help. And we are grateful to all of those who have already asked.

As you celebrate the coming holidays, from Halloween through New Year's Day, all of us at CARE wish you joy, love, and the surrounding warmth of family and friends.

Here's to another awesome holiday season!

Gini



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

LOCATION & PHONE:
321 6th Avenue
Foley, MN
320-968-7848

MAILING ADDRESS:
PO Box 65
Foley, MN 56329

Email:
info@CAREelders.org

Web site:
www.CAREelders.org

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Jen Kipka

Newsletter Editor
Gini Kalton
ginikalton@gmail.com

Board meetings are open to the public on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:00pm in the CARE conference room.

what it is today. Together, we are now preparing for our **15th Annual Touching Tables for Seniors** fundraising event on **October 8 from 12–1 PM at New Life Church in Foley.**

This one-hour luncheon is an opportunity to share CARE's story with our community—our successes, the challenges we face, and our hopes for the future. Local businesses, organizations, city council members, county commissioners, and community members come together to learn more about the difference CARE is making and the needs that still exist.

Touching Tables is one of CARE's most important fundraising events of the year. Donations received at the luncheon are especially meaningful because they help provide the matching funds required for our Department of Human Services **Live Well at Home** grant funding.

As one season gives way to another, I find myself especially grateful—grateful for how far CARE has come, grateful for the people who have helped us get here, and grateful for the possibilities that lie ahead.

Change will continue to come, just as the seasons do. But one thing I hope never changes is the heart of this community: neighbors helping neighbors, people caring for one another, and all of us working together so that our aging adults can continue to live safely and independently in the communities they call home.



VOLUNTEER DRIVERS STANDING BY

Wish you could attend a CARE event? Interested in the Art Class, the Senior Social or the Aging Well Fitness Class, but do not have a ride? Seniors are encouraged to call the CARE office and ask to be connected with one of our wonderful volunteer drivers, *so you do not have to miss out on the fun!*



CARE VOLUNTEER CORNER - BY SARAH KELLEN, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

CARE ANNUAL DRIVER REVIEW

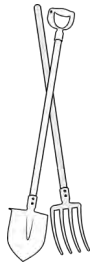
All CARE volunteer drivers annually participate in the driver review. This review includes a vehicle inspection provided by the Benton County Sheriff's Department. Each driver also provides proof of current automobile insurance, and fills out forms for both driver's license and criminal background checks. A signed medical form is submitted to their primary care physician for clearance to drive as a volunteer transporting CARE senior clients. These steps assure the safety of both the client and the volunteer driver. Drivers also receive updates on any changes in State Law or CARE Board Policies with reference to their capacity as volunteers, and are encouraged to ask any questions they may have or to address any concerns.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

YARDWORK / SNOW REMOVAL - VOLUNTEERS WANTED

As the cold season approaches, please consider becoming a volunteer that helps our clients do fall yard clean-up. Families and organizations are encouraged to work together to give our clients a clean-up for the season. Get your shovels out and help to keep the seniors' sidewalks clear of snow! Call the CARE office to sign up for yourself or your group, family or organization.



VOLUNTEER BAKERS WANTED

The CARE November Bake Sale is scheduled for November 1st this year. Our event will be hosted at the Foley American Legion during their Son's of the American Legion Breakfast. The times for the bake sale are currently to be determined, but the breakfast takes place from 8 am to noon.

Volunteer bakers are asked to please call the CARE office and sign up to provide baked goods for the sale. Your donation will need to be delivered to the CARE office on Friday, October 30th between the hours of 9 am and 3 pm so that volunteers will have ample time to arrange, label and price the baked goods.





ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

The CARE Volunteer Appreciation luncheon, hosted by the CARE Board of Directors and held at the St. John's Catholic Church Emmaus Center, was a true testament to the power of collaboration. The CARE Board of Directors extends a sincere thank you to St. John's Catholic Church for donating the space to for CARE to host the event, to Manea's Meats for the donation of hamburger, and to Svihel farm for the donation of produce and fresh fruit. Our many thanks to each of the generous donors who provided door prizes, to the very special volunteers who made the delicious salads, and to the one volunteer who graciously made eight pans of apple crisp.

The Board is especially grateful to Sarah Kellen for her vision and coordination of this event, to the volunteers of the planning committee who worked behind the scenes, assisting with everything from gathering donations to creating gift bags for each guest, and to the entire office staff at CARE who stepped into spaces and filled needs while continuing to provide assistance to clients.

"Red, White and Blue; Thank You For All You Do! We Appreciate You!", a short video produced by Sarah, volunteer Bill Kalton, and Program Coordinator, Jordyn Hofmann, was played to express the gratitude of each of the participants to all the volunteers at CARE. The video included interviews with CARE Board Members, Office Staff, and a heart-felt interview with a couple who are recipients of the generosity of CARE volunteers (the video is posted on our Facebook page).

Special recognition was given to 29 volunteers who have each served CARE clients for more than 15 years, noting that one volunteer has driven over 41,000 miles, and another has donated more than 4,500 hours.

CARE volunteers are teaching by example the importance of being a volunteer by their selfless service to seniors in Benton County and its surrounding areas.



Photo courtesy of Benton County Herald





CARE VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - JUDY RUDNITSKI

Judy's latest volunteer service is as a temporary Scheduling Coordinator at CARE, a vital role that she stepped into during Linda's absence. Her past experience includes ownership of an office services business, assisting both individuals and businesses with a variety of office tasks. As temporary Scheduling Coordinator, Judy interacts directly with both CARE clients and CARE volunteers that are providing the services those clients need. During her time with us, she has shown a level of commitment and hard work that deserves recognition, and both the CARE Board of Directors and CARE staff are very grateful to her.

Judy's journey as a CARE volunteer began 5 years ago providing food deliveries to homebound seniors. She expanded her volunteering to include transportation and respite care, and volunteering at events, fundraisers, and in the CARE office. While providing respite care, Judy would visit with one client to give her spouse a needed rest, but during the friendly visit the spouse would usually stay and visit too, so Judy was able to serve both the client and her primary caregiver.

Judy says her favorite part about volunteering is "...just being there to help people. The most rewarding part of volunteering is seeing the smiles on clients' faces and forming friendships with them. After eight and a half years dealing with cancer, and receiving so much help from others, I wanted to give back to my community. I hope I can make a difference in someone else's life."

Judy lives near Foley with Gordie, her husband of 54 years. Together they have raised two sons, and now enjoy their seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Judy told us that she loves gardening because it helps her relax her mind. She also enjoys boat rides, sitting by a lake, or just sitting outside watching the sun set.



Judy says, "I want everyone to know that volunteering is very rewarding, and that the people we serve are very appreciative."



FOR A LAUGH

As a man steps off the curb to cross the street, a car careers around the corner and heads straight for him. The alarmed man tries to hurry, but the car changes lanes and is still coming at him, so he turns to go back to the sidewalk. Too late - the car changes lanes again. Panicked, the man freezes in the middle of the road, and just as the car is about to hit him, it comes to a screeching halt. The driver's window rolls down, and a squirrel pokes his head out. "See?" he says, "It's not as easy as it looks!"



SCOUTING AMERICA VOLUNTEERING WITH CARE

CARE's Volunteer Coordinator, Sarah Kellen, was very excited to receive the following note from our local Scouting Troops. CARE welcomes volunteers from all youth organizations, and is very grateful to these groups for their unwavering support of the elders in their communities:

"It is that time of the year [when] the Scouts are heading back to school after a busy summer of outdoor activities like camping, fishing, canoeing, and hiking.

With the fall season on its way, the Scouts will be working on their Rank Advancements and we have several Scouts that will start thinking and planning for their Eagle Projects to earn the highest rank in Scouting. In Scouting we understand the importance of Community Involvement and helping our neighbors, which is why our volunteering with CARE is very important, as the Scouts learn to give service to others.

As the leaves fall, the Scouts will remember it is the season to help our Foley Community by raking leaves and cleaning up yards as needed. We are looking forward to another year of activity.

Yours in Scouting,
Randy Hammond
Scouting America Troops 10 B and 1010 G"





CARE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

At CARE, we believe community education is an important part of supporting older adults and their caregivers. Through presentations and outreach at community events, we are able to inform the public about our services and help people discover meaningful ways to get involved in our mission. If your business, church, civic group, or organization would like to host an in-person presentation by CARE, please reach out to the CARE office at **320-968-7848** or by email to the CARE Volunteer Coordinator at **sarahk@CAREelders.org**. Brochures outlining our mission and services are available by request for you to share with your members, employees, or community contacts.

Executive Director Jen Kipka provided an annual presentation to the Benton County Commissioner with a focus on direct services provided to clients referred to CARE by Benton County.

Jen Kipka and Volunteer Coordinator, Sarah Kellen met with the Benton County Human Services MnCHOICES/Adult Protection Unit to share about the CARE program and discuss ways we can work in collaboration to better serve Benton County residents.

Board Chair, Joyce Rife and volunteer Jessica Knicely visited with Foley High School students at the 2026-27 Foley School District Open House. CARE works in collaboration with FHS on projects throughout the year, and experience the students participation as a great asset to our volunteer team.



CARE AT FOLEY FUN DAYS



Another successful event was made possible by the dedicated volunteers at CARE, from cooking and serving the corndogs and chicken strips, to selling raffle tickets for the playset; and making a parade float another “presentation” of CARE to the visiting crowds. These efforts are part of the mission to support seniors to continue living independently home of their choice.

Left: Volunteers, Russ & Sandy, and the staff of CARE greeted and served hungry customer.



Stay tuned as we get this delivered and ready for one lucky winner! ❤️

#ReliantRoofing #DroppingIn #GivingBack
#CARE #Playset #CommunityFirst

Left: The playset, donated to CARE by Reliant Roofing, was raffled off during Foley Fun Days. The lucky winner was Mary Spiczka, who told us she planned to give it to her grandchildren.

Sincere thanks to Reliant Roofing for this generous donation in support of seniors!

Below & right: Volunteers decorated the CARE Foley Fun Days Parade float and walked the route sharing candy with the crowd. Our thanks to Scott Manea who donated the use of his '57 Chevy truck and drove the float, and to Mary and Nora Keating and Rose Duevel for "presenting" CARE to the crowd!





SAFETY FOR SENIORS by Troy Heck, Benton County Sheriff



In my last column, I urged readers to remain vigilant in their crime prevention strategies to combat person crime, property crime, and scams. In this column, we dig a bit deeper into each of these categories and provide some specific advice and tools for staying safe.

Prevention of person crimes like assault, robbery, or carjacking primarily relies upon maintaining situational awareness and having a plan. Prevention requires recognizing signs of aggression or situations that create a vulnerability. In cases when someone appears to be escalating their behavior, try letting the person know you are listening to them and acknowledge their feelings. While doing this, either maintain or work to create distance and barriers between you and the threat. Leave the area, get behind a closed door, or just move as far away from the person as possible. Call 911 or have someone else call for you to get law enforcement assistance coming your way. Recognizing troublesome circumstances can help prevent robbery or carjacking. A stranger at your door seeking to come inside is a situation to be managed. Work to identify the person and what they want with the door still closed. Only after you're sure it is safe should you open the door and evaluate the situation further. Be alert for individuals loitering at places where vehicles must stop or slow down. Whenever possible, stop far enough back from the vehicle in front of you to allow yourself a path of escape if a threat emerges.

Preventing property crime is all about making it harder to steal your things. Quality locks on doors and windows help secure a building from a would-be burglar. Using deadbolt locks that are well secured into the door frame makes breaking in a building much more difficult. Make a habit of using the good locks you've installed regularly to get the most out of these crime prevention tools. Locking your vehicle doors and taking the keys inside will help keep away thieves who would steal your vehicle or the things inside it. Far too many stolen vehicles are taken using the keys thieves find inside them. Stolen property too is more often taken from owners who leave their vehicles unlocked. Take valuables with you or keep valuables out of sight when you're not in the vehicle. Good lighting and good sight lines around buildings will make thieves think twice. Keep bushes and shrubs trimmed to less than three feet tall and keep trees trimmed up to at least seven feet tall. Motion lights are a great tool to keep the outside of your home secure. Security systems have also become very affordable and very easy for a homeowner to install. These systems add another layer of deterrent to keep thieves at bay. Find the right system for your needs, become familiar with its operation, and make a habit of keeping the system active.

Criminals will always be working to take money from victims in new and frighteningly clever ways. Any time someone promises you something too good to be true, it is certainly too good to be true. Don't let the wish for a quick windfall turn into a financial disaster. You're likely tired of hearing this phrase, but I'll say it again, always be suspicious of someone who contacts you unexpectedly. No matter who they claim to be, especially if their message is one of urgency, you should be suspicious. Scammers try their best to play on your doubt, fears, and unfamiliarity. These criminals will weave a lie that sounds like it could be true, work to convince you that you must act now, or try to sound like they are a subject matter expert who is going to help you. Regardless of what story they tell you, if the contact was unexpected, you should never give the person access to a digital device, money, personal information, or banking information. Stay prepared, stay cautious, and stay safe!



TIPS TO HELP YOUR EYES AGE GRACEFULLY

Aging affects the entire body, including your eyes. Although some changes are unavoidable, there are little things you can do to try and keep your eyes working well.

1. Annual eye exams. A comprehensive eye exam every year is important. Eye conditions, such as glaucoma, can slowly deteriorate your vision without any symptoms. A comprehensive exam will look for problems before they cause permanent vision loss.
2. Routine diabetic eye exams. Diabetes can affect the eyes and cause loss of vision. The retina (back of the eye) should be examined for changes every year. Even if your diabetes is under control or if you are simply “prediabetic”, yearly eye exams are recommended by your primary care doctor and your eye doctor.
3. Eating a healthy diet and not smoking. Macular degeneration is a common eye condition as we age. Increasing age and genetics are the main causes of macular degeneration. Obviously, you can’t change your age or family history! What you can do to help prevent or slow down macular degeneration is avoid smoking, protect your eyes from UV rays of the sun, and eat plenty of dark green leafy vegetables (spinach and kale are best).

Having good vision is an important aspect as we age. Some problems are hard to prevent, but doing what you can to keep your eyes healthy will be beneficial long term!



CARE FRESH PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION

The CARE Fresh Produce Distribution is free for all Benton County residents. You will be asked for the number of persons in your household, no personal information is required, and there are no age or income qualifiers. CARE purchases produce from Second Harvest Heartland, who delivers it to the CARE office on the second Mondays of August, September, and October from 11 am to 1 pm or until it is gone. We do not know in advance what will be delivered each month. CARE volunteers sort and bag the produce, help carry it to your vehicle, and some are available to deliver to home-bound residents by calling to schedule a volunteer driver in advance.





CARE SENIOR SOCIAL - *FREE* LIVE ENTERTAINMENT, LUNCH, & BINGO!



This social event takes place on the third Wednesday of every month. Lunches are catered; and are served by our friendly volunteers. Music is provided, live, by various musicians, and lunch is followed by ten rounds of Bingo! Come out and meet new friends, or bring your own for an afternoon of music, food, and fun - and if you need a ride, call CARE to schedule one of our dedicated volunteer drivers.



CARE AGING WELL FITNESS CLASSES

Join friends and neighbors for a fitness class at the downtown Snap Fitness studio in Foley every Tuesday from 1-2 pm. Need a ride? Call CARE in advance to schedule a volunteer driver!



CARE ART CLASSES

Call the CARE office to reserve your space at the next class! Remember, CARE's dedicated volunteer drivers are standing by to help if you need a ride, just let us know when you register for the class and we will do our best to schedule that ride for you. Participants have a wonderful time creating and visiting together! Classes are the third Tuesday of every month from 10 am to noon.



CONTRIBUTORS - Donations received 6/10/2026 - 9/08/2026 *THANK YOU!*

Cash Donations

Art Class Participants
Dombrovski Meats
Thrivent Financial
Schmidt Insurance
Senior Social Guests
South Santiago Lutheran Church
Thomas Arkuszewski
Kathleen Balvitsch
Theodore Beebe
Brenda Berkebile
Gerard Bettendorf
Greg Burnham
Mary Carlson
Joe Czech
Shirley Dingmann
Martha Frady
Julie Goenner
Carolyn Harris
Clyde Hinkemeyer
Jim Jesok
Virginia (Gini) Kalton
Debra Kazeck
Evelyn Kirby
Janice Koscielniak
Ruth Kothman
Marianna Kuechle
Norman Latterell
Michael & Deborah Lechner
Harry & Yvonne Linz
Bonnie Maske
Joan Mazacek
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South Santiago Lutheran Church

In-Kind Donations

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St Cloud Toyota
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Starbucks Coffee (downtown)
Starbucks Coffee Company
Subway
Svihel Vegetable Farm
The Cutting Edge Salon
Traut Companies
Virginia (Gini) Kalton
Willy Ts
Wippler Hardware Hank

Memorials

Patricia Abfalter
in memory of Jan Kaproth
Grace Glein
in memory of Violet Moeller-David
Mia Hansen
in memory of Sandra Ouellette and
Nievas Mogas
Evelyn Kirby
in memory of Violet Moeller-David,
Jan Kaproth, and Patricia Meisel
Janet Kroska
in memory of Leon Moeller
Joan Mazacek
in memory of Violet Moeller-David
Rita Moeller
in memory of Leon Moeller
Joyce Rife
in memory of Jan Kaproth
Mary Ann Schueller
in memory of Sandra Ouellette



2025 GENERAL ELECTION INFORMATION

Minnesota's General Election is November 3, 2025!

**Seniors may call CARE to schedule a ride to the polls,
or for assistance with absentee ballots.**

Here's what voters need to know:

- ◆ Election Day voting hours are 7:00am to 8:00pm, statewide.
- ◆ Sample ballots will be available in September (46 days before Election Day).
- ◆ By Minnesota law, you can also vote early, in person or by mail-in (absentee ballot), beginning in September (46 days before Election Day).

To vote early by absentee ballot (in person or mail-in):

- ◆ In person, at the Benton County Auditor/Treasurer's office, 531 Dewey Street, Foley.
- ◆ By mail-in ballot; you may request an absentee ballot online at:

sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/vote-early-by-mail/

To read more information about absentee voting, visit:
sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/

For your mail-in (absentee) ballot to count, remember this important information:

- ◆ Read the instructions that come with your ballot carefully.
- ◆ You will need a witness when you vote and complete your ballot. The witness can be either a registered Minnesota voter or a notary public.
- ◆ Return the ballot and forms right away after you finish.
- ◆ Your ballot will not count if it is received after Election Day.

To vote in person on Election Day, find where you vote:

- ◆ Visit **pollfinder.sos.mn.gov/**
- ◆ Or call the Benton County Auditor/Treasurer's office at 320-968-5027



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of the publication of this newsletter from



Sincere gratitude for Live Well at Home
grant funding from the



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Energy and cost saver! To request our newsletter by email call 320-968-7848

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO SCHEDULE A RIDE OR FOOD DELIVERY
CALL CARE 320-968-7848**

OCTOBER

Aging Well Fitness Classes Tuesdays 1-2 pm
08 Touching Tables for Seniors 12:00 noon
12 All Food Distribution Programs 11:00 am
20 Art Class 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
21 Senior Social 11 am - 2 pm

DECEMBER

Aging Well Fitness Classes Tuesdays 1-2 pm
14 NAPS Distribution 11:00 am
15 Art Class 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
16 Senior Social 11am - 2 pm

NOVEMBER

Aging Well Fitness Classes Tuesdays 1-2 pm
09 All Food Distribution Programs 11:00 am
17 Art Class 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
18 Senior Social 11 am - 2 pm

JANUARY 2027

Aging Well Fitness Classes Tuesdays 1-2 pm
11 NAPS Distribution 11:00 am
19 Art Class 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
20 Senior Social 11am - 2 pm