

# Amazing Aging!

**For Seniors and Those Who Love Them**

**A free publication of the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.**

**Advocacy, Action and Answers on Aging for Shawnee, Jefferson and Douglas Counties**

**SUMMER 2025**



Shawnee, Jefferson & Douglas Counties

## **Our Mission**

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc. advocates on aging issues, builds community partnerships and implements programs within Shawnee, Jefferson, and Douglas counties to help seniors live independent and dignified lives.

- Is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
- Is funded by tax-deductible contributions, federal funds, under state general funds and funds through local governments
- Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, or disability



Eric Wilkins, Lead Guitar and Vocalist; Matt Dollar, Pedal Steel Guitar; Roy Flowers, Drums; Tim Doyle, Lead Vocalist and Rhythm Guitar; and Bryan Hicks, Bass Guitar.

**Buck Creek: The Heart and Soul of Country Music  
Story begins on page 3.**

# A Message from Susan Harris, JAAA Executive Director

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging's relies on funding through the Older Americans Act works, but they are not the only source of funding we receive that enables us to provide services to you and your loved ones year-round. That is why Jayhawk is requesting your help with donations to defer costs for all the great programming we do. It is crucial now more than ever to call for donations and speak to you about the funding we receive to help older adults in our three counties get crucial in-home services.

These services include attendant care and homemaker services to help older adults clean their homes, do their laundry,

safely take a bath as well as respite services that allow family caregivers to get a much-needed break to recharge and refresh so they can continue to provide the care their family members need. These services help older adults

stay in their homes and live with dignity and respect as they age in place and prevent or delay nursing facility care and are provided by contracting home health agencies. The in-home services funding through the Older Americans

Act is limited as is the funding received through the state Senior Care Act for in-home services. The cost of providing the service has increased in recent years, as has the number of older adults

needing these services.

With older adults living longer and many older adults running out of resources to pay for the care they need and limited funding for that care, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging is looking for donations to help provide homemaker, attendant care, and respite services. Four hours a week of homemaker and attendant care services cost \$6,300/year and 75 hours

of respite a year for a caregiver costs \$3,000/year.

We wouldn't be able to provide these and other programs without your support and appreciate however much you are able to give. As we enter our fifth decade of serving older adults, help us ensure that these services can continue in our community for years to come. Thank you for your continued support!



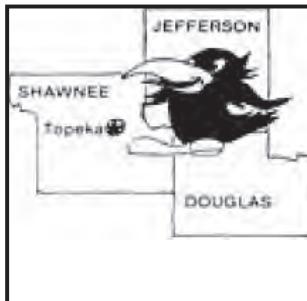
**Susan Harris**

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- Funded by annual contributions from readers like you, and advertising
- Copies distributed: 6,000+

You are encouraged to write us at:

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Marsha Henry Goff, editor



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**Please help us help you or someone you love by completing our Community Needs Assessment Survey on pages 9 and 10. You may mail it to JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611-2121 or drop it by our office. You may also take it online at [www.jhawkaaa.org](http://www.jhawkaaa.org). Thank you!**

**Amazing Aging** strives to provide readers with the information they need to live independent and productive lives. We also seek to feature stories of seniors who are active as workers, volunteers or engaged in hobbies. If you know a senior you would like to see featured in a future issue, please contact editor Marsha Henry Goff at [mhgink@netscape.net](mailto:mhgink@netscape.net) or write to her in care of JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611.

# Buck Creek Band: the heart and soul of country music

By Marsha Henry Goff

Photos by Suzanne Doyle  
(unless otherwise credited)

Buck Creek is a country band that is rapidly growing in popularity partly due to the chemistry between its five talented musicians. The band began as a duo with Tim Doyle, Lawrence, and Eric Wilkins, Perry, who hit it off as friends and musicians when they met and performed together at Slow Ride restaurant in North Lawrence in November, 2018. The two began performing in 2019 as Buck Creek, named after the rural road where Eric lives and grew up.

Tim and Eric still perform as a duo in spaces too small for the full band and have performed for several years at the ABATE motorcycle rally on Labor Day weekend at Paradise Point on Lake Perry. ABATE is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for motorcyclist rights, promoting safety, and fostering education within the motorcycle community. Eric also serves as the mainstage deejay at the rally which features live music as well as food and merchandise vendors.

Buck Creek performs at service organizations (American Legions, VFWs), fraternal organizations (Eagles, et al), small town bars and private parties. To a man, Buck Creek band members refer to the others as brothers. Their like — some refer to it as love — for one another and their respect for each other's talent is obvious both on stage and off and likely contributes to the band's success.

Although musically inclined,

Tim Doyle, lead vocalist and rhythm guitar for Buck Creek, came late to playing the guitar. He plays some piano and played the trombone in his high school marching band, but has been playing the guitar for only eleven years. He bought a guitar for his wife Suzanne who wanted to learn to play, but says, "It sat in the corner gathering dust so I called a buddy of mine who played the guitar and said, 'Show me what you know.'"

Admittedly a shy guy, Tim's first performance was at an open mic in La Paz, Mexico, in February, 2018, playing his buddy's brother's guitar. "Even when I'm on stage, I don't talk a lot," he says. "If we're out, I'll be sitting alone. It's where I'm most comfortable."

Back home, a friend told him he needed to start doing gigs. He says he didn't even know what "gigging" was, but his friend wouldn't take no for an answer so he started performing Tuesday nights at S&S Coffee House in Lawrence. Tim believes that "probably anyone in the band plays the guitar better than I do," but, according to Eric, "Tim is a heck of a guitar player. He has taken leaps and bounds with his guitar play and has a beautiful voice."

That beautiful voice is evident when he sings "The Toast," a song about PTSD that he wrote two years ago. When the band was playing a gig, a man came up several times during the evening to request the same song: "Ships that Don't Come In." Each time, Tim, a former Marine, told him he did not know it. The last time the man requested the song, Tim said, "I



Buck Creek playing Tim Doyle's original song, "The Toast." Photo by Annemarie Chilton.

still don't know it, but I promise you I will learn it."

At that point the man, a Vietnam era veteran, told him his experience of losing a friend suffering from PTSD who committed suicide. "It is more his story than mine," Tim says, "but I thought it needed to be written."

The first words of "The Toast" set the stage: *When I finally heard the news, I said a prayer for you. I guess those demons deep inside finally got the best of you.* The lines that give the song its title are: *So I'll tap one time and lift one high and give a toast to you. Your war is finally over . . . Fair winds and following seas.* You may listen to Tim sing "The Toast" on YouTube.

Tim Doyle has developed into a prolific songwriter, but "The Toast" resonates with many. As important as music is to him, like most others in the band, he has a day job. He and a

partner are ITs who own Green-light Data Solutions.

Eric Wilkins sizes up his fellow band members by saying, "Music is in our DNA." He plays lead guitar for Buck Creek and is a vocalist. He and Tim sing backup for each other. Eric is a songwriter who admits, "I'm a sucker for ballads." He also writes poetry and says, "There's no method to the madness, a verse will pop in my head or I'll be playing my guitar and a melody will just come to me. You try to put your feelings into words."

You can watch him perform at Buckcreek2015 on TikTok: His song "All Your Sins" is about addiction and "Take Me Away" is a very personal song about how his marriage ended.

Even though he works long days as a mechanic/cattleman/ranch hand for a large farming operation, he always makes

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# Buck Creek

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time for music, sometimes sitting in his pickup on a dirt road at night, playing his guitar and singing. "If I'm in a down mood, I pick up my guitar and begin to play and it soothes me. Or I sing and it makes things better."

He has been playing the guitar since he was 11 years old and as a child listened to his mother's family band practice and often accompanied them on gigs. He cannot imagine facing the hurdles life has thrown his way without music and says simply and sincerely, "Music is a big thing in my life. It's my soul."

He is grateful to have a fiancé who understands that music is a way of life for him, "If we've got to go and play in Western Kansas, Missouri or Oklahoma, wherever it's at, I tell her, 'We've got to go here and do this,' and she says, 'OK, Babe. Be safe.'"

Eric has been a solo musician, part of a duo with a female musician, and played in four bands over the years but notes that, "Tim and I have stuck like glue. Tim's like my brother," he says, then adds with a laugh, "If you tell him that, tell him I said 'my much, much, older brother!'"

Matt Dollar plays a pedal steel guitar — which can sound hauntingly like a horn — to play "Taps" preceding "The Toast." In addition to playing with Buck Creek, he currently plays with three other bands: Lawrence's Crying Out Loud since 1999, Eudora's Wakarusa River Band for two years, and occasionally with Gullywasher, a band out of Kansas City. Although retired

from KU where he worked about 20 years as an accounting specialist and a grant specialist along with several other positions, he is so busy that Tim says it took a long time to get Matt interested in joining Buck Creek.

Matt has been playing with Buck Creek about three years, saying, "Eventually our schedules synced enough that I was able to play with him. He started booking more gigs, and as long as he got to the date before anyone else did, I would commit to it."

He says when they met, Tim had only been playing about five years but it was immediately obvious how motivated he was about playing and writing. In return, Tim says that, "Matt gave me some ideas to help me get out of my comfort zone."

Matt says songwriting is not his forte. "Song writing" he says, "is a unique skill. Like anything, you really need to work at it. Some people can pop out a song and it will be good but the general rule is they have to work at it and it is actually pretty hard."

Playing the pedal steel guitar, which is primarily played in country or Hawaiian music, is difficult for many. He chose that instrument because of its prominent place in country rock which was popular in the late '60s and early '70s. His motivators were Jerry Garcia of Crosby, Stills and Nash, John Call with Pure Prairie League and Buddy Cage with New Riders of the Purple Sage. His choice of the pedal steel was also influenced by a Manhattan band dubbed South of the Tracks.

He played the instrument as a child and says he was not very good which frustrated him. But he persevered and became



With a borrowed guitar, Tim Doyle makes his first public performance at an open mic in La Paz, Mexico. Photo courtesy of Tim Doyle.

expert at it and has played in at least one band since 1979 or 1980.

Matt grew up in Manhattan where the lead singer for the band Kansas (famous for "Dust in the Wind") lived next door and he listened to their rehearsals. He says music played an outsized part of his life. From

age five, he listened to music and says he "loved the way it could evoke emotions, spark memories, and paint pictures in your mind."

It was Matt who brought drummer Roy Flowers into the band because he had played with him in another band. Roy

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# Buck Creek

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says that he ran into Matt at an ABATE rally and when he said he was playing with Buck Creek, Roy said, "If you ever need a drummer, give me a call."

"He gave me a call less than a year ago," Roy says, "and we've been playing together ever since. I love those guys. They are fun to play with."

Roy is a long-distance truck driver who lives in Eldorado and says he doesn't mind the two-hour drive to practice and perform with Buck Creek. At five years old, he began beating on coffee cans with butter knives and when he turned ten, his father bought him a drum set. "Dad said it was the worst thing he could have ever done because I drove my parents crazy with those drums!" He jokes that he now sets up his drums in the attic and torments his wife.

He is self-taught. "I listened to the radio and the beat of the drums and I figured it out. That's the best way to do it. Music is a lot of fun to figure out. I can listen to a song and do it the way they did it or I can twist it around and make it my own. Make it just sound more awesome than it was before."

When he was in his mid-20s and 30s, he played with a band called Runaround that played a little bit of everything — country, rock, the Beatles, Buddy Holly — the music he grew up with. When driving cross country in his truck, he listens to his Pandora playlist which consists of music from George Strait to Ernest Tubbs, ZZ Top to Metallica, Buddy Holland, Ritchie

Valens and The Big Bopper.

From childhood, he has dreamed of being in Nashville playing for a band, traveling the world. "I never give up on my dreams" he says. "One day it could happen." As for now, he is happy playing with Buck Creek and hopes to play with them for many years to come. "I love those guys to death; they're a great group of guys. There's never a dull moment around Eric and Tim."

He is also utilizing their talents to help him learn how to do chords on the guitar. "My dad was going to teach me, but we never got around to it." Roy likes to go out and interact with the audience after the first set. "I see if they have requests, if the band is too loud or too soft. I'm always up to something."

Roy likes to sing and has tried his hand at songwriting, but says it has not worked out. He mentions "The Toast," saying, "That song always gets me. It's a great song. Heartfelt. He really did a great job with it."

Bryan Hicks is Buck Creek's bass guitar player. He is the only member of the band who has made his living solely as a full-time professional musician since age 20 when he played with many of Kansas City's jazz greats. When reminded that the other band members have not relied on music for a living, Bryan laughs, "I may be the only one who can't do anything else."

Originally he played the guitar in high school but made the switch to bass in college with the encouragement of his jazz band's director who convinced him he would never lack for work if he played bass. He says he was insecure in high

CONTINUED ON PAGE SIX

## Lyrics to "The Toast"

An original song by Tim Doyle

When I finally heard the news,  
I said a prayer for you.

I guess those demons deep inside,  
Finally got the best of you.

Left to fight alone,  
Even after you got home.

I guess those scars just ran too deep,  
And those wounds just wouldn't heal.

We must have heard taps played  
A thousand times,

And built a battlefield cross or two.  
But we were strong and carried on,  
We did what we had to do.

I never dreamed that when the last shot fired,  
A new war began.

It was the war within ourselves,  
The war that NEVER ends.

We had Semper Fi on our chest,  
And I wish you all the best.

It's been a long, hard road but now you're home,  
And you can finally rest.

So I'll tap one time and lift one high,  
And give a toast to you.

Your war is finally over . . .  
Fair winds and following seas.

I can still see us standing side by side,  
Surrounded by death.

I cursed, I cried, I tried to hide,  
But I just can't forget.

I prayed to God but no one answered,  
And in my heart I knew . . .

We'd see that flag one more time,  
As one of twenty-two.

We had Semper Fi on our chest,  
And I wish you all the best.

It's been a long, hard road but now you're home,  
And you can finally rest.

So I'll tap one time and lift one high,  
And give a toast to you.

Your war is finally over . . .  
Fair winds and following seas.

# Buck Creek

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE

school and not good at the dating scene. Music turned out to be a girl magnet and he liked the attention.

But music has changed for him over the years, "The whole reason I play and continue to play and can never imagine not playing," he says, "is because now it's my way of getting in touch with a higher power. I feel music is sort of a manifestation of something much greater than we are. It's a very universal thing."

He plays all different styles of music as evidenced by a recent performance at the Eldridge with his jazz trio, but he likes playing country music because that is the music he grew up with and has fond memories of sitting in his bedroom playing Wabash Cannonball with his dad. Playing with Buck Creek is like getting back in touch with his youth. "I haven't played any country music for a long time," he says, "so this has been a joy playing with these guys."

He mentions that he has "aged out a little bit" and that work he was doing 30 years ago

is now going to musicians who are 30 years younger than he is. But success is not just for the young. "Tim is a latecomer and he's really coming along," Bryan says. "He's a songwriter. He's really good and it was just like it was sitting there waiting for him to decide he was going to do it. Tim is a remarkable guy. I have come to appreciate him more and more the longer I know him. Besides just being a decent guy, he's a musician. He's become a really good songwriter."

Bryan is also a songwriter. His song "November" was written after the death of his mother. You can listen to him sing that beautiful and poignant song on YouTube. He says that music has always been a lifesaver for him and it kept hope alive when he badly needed hope. "Music to me is more of a prayer. When it's really working well, it's a prayer of gratitude just to be able to do it."

The importance of music to each of the band members is something Bryan feels on the bandstand. "We're all brothers. We're all different but we're alike in more ways than not."

Perhaps that is the best way to describe Buck Creek: A Band of Brothers.



**Tim Doyle**

Lead vocalist and rhythm guitar



**Eric Wilkins**

Lead guitar and vocalist



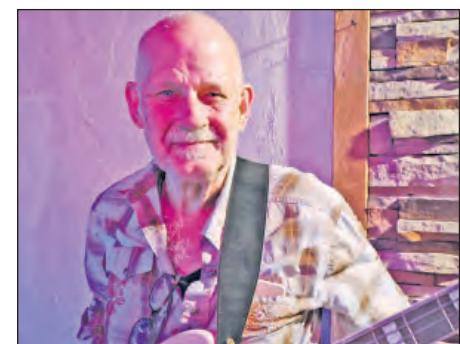
**Matt Dollar**

Pedal steel guitar



**Roy Flowers**

Drums



**Bryan Hicks**

Bass guitar

## Listening to Music is Good for You!



Listening to music offers many benefits for both physical and mental well-being. It impacts mood, cognitive function, and even physical performance. Music can reduce stress and anxiety, improve mood, enhance cognitive functions, and even aid in pain management. And listening to music feels good. That's because it causes the release of dopamine, a feel-good neurochemical that can lead to feelings of pleasure. Music improves memory and boosts intelligence. Music also boosts productivity and creativity. Best of all, you are never too old to benefit from the brain-boosting power of music!

# Carolee Meseraull: Making Water Aerobics FUN!

By Marsha Henry Goff

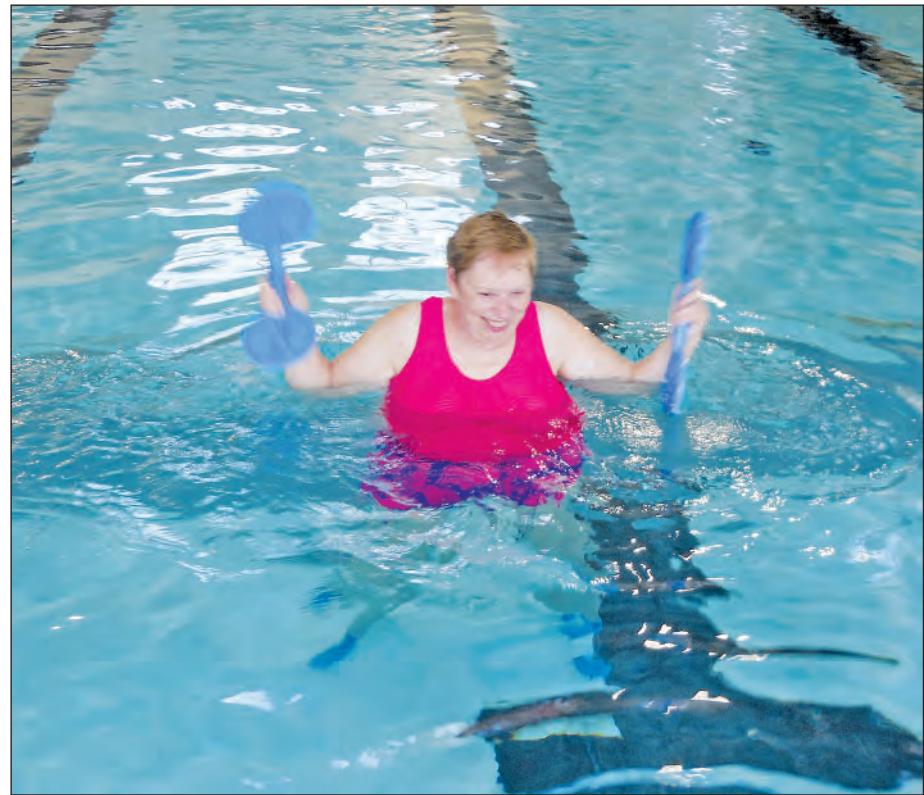
Carolee Meseraull is a proverbial Energizer Bunny who admits that she cannot sit still long enough to complete a jigsaw puzzle. While she may be old enough to be retired, the word "retirement" isn't in her vocabulary. When she leaves one job, she simply starts another and for the last two years has been a water aerobics instructor of two classes of Jivin' Joints for seniors at the Lawrence Aquatic Center. "I took a water aerobics class for eight years," she says, "and when the teacher left, I became the teacher."

The popularity of her teaching style is evident in the fact that her classes are always full with a waiting list for those who hope to get into one of her classes. While classes are comprised mostly of women, they are not always all female.

Men also need to be fit. Her students have fun and so does she. And having fun is clearly her intention. "I just try to make it fun and help people with their exercise and some just want to have fellowship." She says that the opportunity to interact with others is especially important for widows who live alone.

Carolee notes that each class is a community where people can develop relationships. "We have become friends and truly do watch out for each other." As evidence, she cites class members who bring food, as does she, when someone has surgery or loses a loved one. She coordinates the Christmas party and maintains the Jivin' Joints Water Warriors Facebook page. She goes to lunch with students and is going to an upcoming concert with several women from one class.

She recently took a job to help a friend build her busi-



Carolee is about to have fun with paddles.

ness and announced to her that job and continue to teach two classes that, as much as she would like to, she could not do

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



Students get a workout following Carolee's instructions.



Carolee is moving so fast she's just a blur!

# Caregiver Support

## The many facets of dementia

By Michele Dillon

JAAA ADRC Supervisor

This article will look at different behaviors and moods of dementia and what may be behind it. Unfortunately, dementia takes away the ability to communicate as the disease progresses. Having some inkling of what might be causing the behavior can help resolve it.

### DEPRESSION

Isolation, pain, sense of loss, lack of structure or purpose can all be linked to depression. Those suffering with the disease will pick up on how the caregiver is feeling and can sometimes mirror that emotion so if they sense conflict or anger that can contribute.

### WANDERING AND EXIT SEEKING

Is there an unmet need, i.e. hot or cold, needing the bathroom or hungry. Offer a snack or a sweater to redirect. Maybe they are bored, anxious or in pain. If the wandering comes on suddenly with increased confusion, check for a UTI. Maybe they are looking for something or wanting to go to work.

### RESISTANCE TO CARE

Refusal to bathe is a common issue. Sometimes just asking later will work. Try the morning



Michele Dillon

instead of evening or visa versa. They may have a fear of water or a fear of exposure. I would recommend watching Teepa Snows tips on bathing. You can find it on YouTube. Turn the bathroom into a SPA, Steamy and warm and use the word SPA instead of shower.

### REPETITIOUS QUESTIONING

Because of the short-term memory this is a common and expected side effect of the disease. Pay attention to these cues. How many times and for how long are the questions repeated.

Is it the same theme? Some reasons for these questions might be boredom or overstimulation or maybe they are just needing company and trying to make conversation. Redirect based on the question. If wanting to go home, ask about it. Maybe something like ...Tell me about your home, did you have your own bedroom, did you work on the farm. Here I have some pictures let me show them to you.

### NOT SLEEPING

If sleeping during the day and up at night they need to be kept engaged during the day. Helping set the table, folding clothes, sorting, card playing, easy puzzles and music are all engaging activities to help with boredom

during the day. Limit naps to an hour or two. There will be increased sleeping as the disease progresses, but I am referring to the reverse sleep cycle.

### HIDING, MOVING OR ALTERING ITEMS

Packing, hoarding or moving items can indicate overstimulation and a cluttered environment. Simplify the space. Remove extra clothing to a different closet or dresser or put locks on the drawers. Limit choice. This could be a sign of boredom or confusion to a change in environment. Offer to help them move things or pack. This could also mean a loss of control. Engage them in a meaningful activity that helps them continue to feel useful.

### REFUSAL TO EAT, DRINK OR TAKE MEDICATION

This could mean they are overwhelmed by the number of medications they are taking or have never been a fan of taking meds to begin with. Work with all doctors involved and eliminate meds they don't need. Life prolonging meds may no longer be needed. Anxiety or mood stabilizers may be. Work with the physicians to decide. Can the med be provided in a liquid form or crushed. Look for these alternatives.

Can food be served one item at a time? Don't put mashed potatoes on a white plate? They can't see it. Taste buds might have changed. Add some spice to taste. Try Glucerna with ice cream in a blender for a milk shake.

### SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL

I think the main reason for social withdrawal is the lack of initiation. They don't know that they need it. They don't know how to initiate activity or what to ask for at this stage in the disease. Prompt and encourage. Use phrases like I need your help with . . . , Let's play cards . . . , They need your help at . . . If you ask they will say no because they don't understand the question. Make sure you keep expectation low. Don't set them up to fail. If they continue to refuse they may be depressed, sick or tired.

### SUNDOWNING

Individuals with dementia may experience more restlessness, confusion and agitation in the afternoon and evening hours. Keep the home bright and keep caffeine intake to the morning hours. Limit the afternoon coffee, soda and tea with caffeine. Make sure there is not an unmet need like toileting or needing a snack or dinner. Music therapy or talking a walk around the neighborhood may help with the anxiety.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. I am here to help you navigate the journey. We have scholarships available to help with In-home care or our adult day Care 4 All program. Call me at 785-235-2367 to make an appointment to discuss today's needs and tomorrow's plans.

- Michele Dillon Caregiver support specialist, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 785-235-1367.

Please visit us online at  
[www.jhawkaaa.org](http://www.jhawkaaa.org).

Help us serve you better. Please complete both front and back pages of our survey and mail it to or drop it by JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS 66611. Thank you!



## Older Adult Community Needs Assessment

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging is conducting this survey in our three-county planning and service area to determine the needs of older adults and assist with development of programs and services for individuals aged 60 and older and their caregivers. Your input will be utilized in planning and service delivery of programs offered and funded through Federal Older Americans Act funds to benefit older adults in Jefferson, Douglas, and Shawnee Counties in Kansas. Your responses are confidential and only group data will be reported.

**1. What county do you live in?**

- Douglas County, Kansas
- Jefferson County, Kansas
- Shawnee County, Kansas
- Other county

**2. Please check all that apply.**

- I receive older adult services
- I am aged 60+
- I am a family caregiver to an older adult
- I work for a company or organization that assists older adults
- I am a community member under age 60

**3. What do you think are the three concerns that have the greatest impact on an older adult continuing to live independently? Select only three (3).**

- chronic health issues
- inability to maintain housing
- inability to do self-care
- inability to do housekeeping
- isolation or loneliness
- transportation
- managing medications
- loss of hearing or vision
- difficulty walking or moving
- support for family caregiver

- mental health support
- not having enough money
- difficulty preparing meals
- abuse, neglect, exploitation, fraud support
- managing budget and paying bills
- memory loss or cognitive difficulties
- unable to drive
- using technology

**4. For each service area, please rate how important each service is for older adults: essential, important, somewhat important, or not important**

	Essential	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Meal site meals (Congregate Meals)				
Home Delivered Meals				
Grab and Go Meals				
Adult Day Services				
Information and Referral Services				
Housing Options assistance				
Homemaker Services				
Personal Care Services				
Grab bar installation, ramps, bathroom modifications, etc.				
Home Repairs				
Transportation to medical appointments and pharmacy				
Transportation to other settings				
Shopping				
Managing chronic disease				
Fall prevention programs				
Legal Assistance				
Long Term Care Planning Assistance				
Benefits enrollment assistance				
Family Caregiver Support Services (Respite, Support Groups, In Home Services)				

**5. Please check the three older adult services that are most in need of additional funding because of unmet needs in your community. (Select only three)**

- Meal Site Meals (Congregate Meals)
- Home Delivered Meals
- Grab and Go Meals
- Adult Day Services
- Information and Referral Services
- Housing Options Assistance
- Transportation to medical appointments and pharmacy
- Transportation to other settings
- Shopping
- Classes to learn about managing chronic disease
- Fall prevention programs
- Homemaker Services Personal Care Services
- Grab bar installation, ramps, bathroom modifications, etc.
- Home Repairs
- Legal Assistance
- Long Term Care Planning Assistance
- Benefits enrollment assistance
- Family Caregiver Support Services (Respite, Support Groups, In Home Services)

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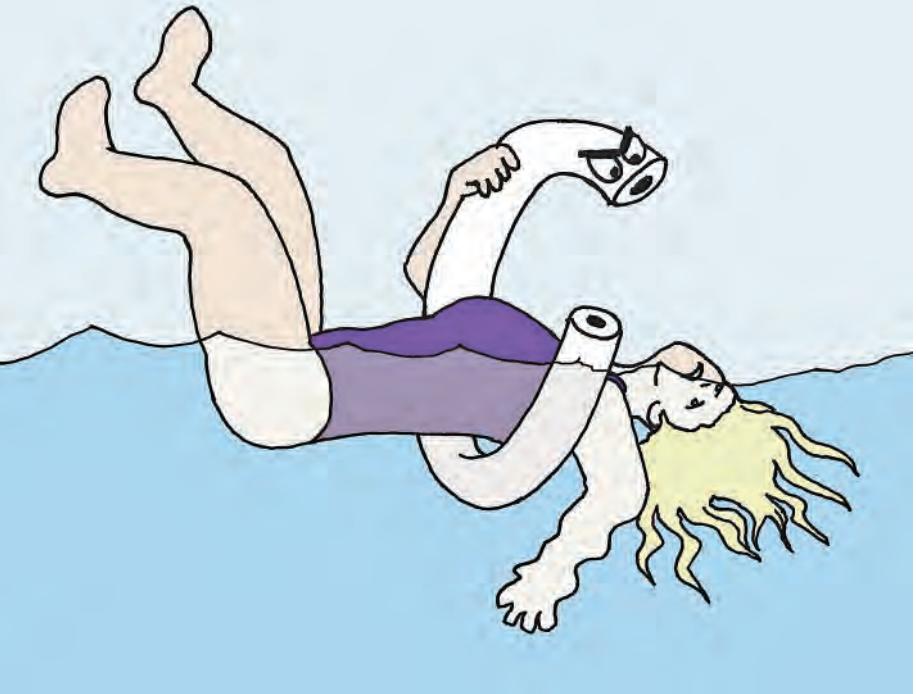
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# Die, Noodle, die!

By Marsha Henry Goff

When I signed up for a water aerobics class, I had no idea we'd be working with pool noodles or that an especially malevolent noodle would attempt to drown me. It happened this week when the instructor said we should wrap the noodle around our back just under our shoulders with the ends sticking up through our armpits, lie back in the water and kick with our legs.

Problem is the only part of my anatomy that is not extremely buoyant is my head, so when my legs came out of the water flailing skyward, my head tried to go under water, causing

me to splash with my arms and scream a lot. My friend Karen tried to free me from the murderous noodle and finally succeeded or I wouldn't be here to write about the experience. And the lifeguard? Sure, she could have jumped into the four-feet-deep water to save me but she didn't. I presume it was because she was laughing too hard.

At today's class, the instructor expected me to do it again. Fool me once! So while the other class members managed to do the exercise with their legs *in* the water and their heads *out* of the water, I quietly held my noodle *under* the water and tried to strangle it. Die, Noodle, die!

Please visit us online at  
[www.jhawkaaa.org](http://www.jhawkaaa.org).

# Meseraull

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plans to continue to coordinate events, maintain the Facebook page and promises to substitute teach when the new teacher must be absent.

The two aerobics classes honored her with a farewell luncheon attended by both current

and former students, presented her with a dozen pink roses and a monetary gift contributed by class members. One class member, already missing her, shed a few tears.

At the end of her last class, to no one's surprise, Carolee Meseraull barreled down the tall, curving slide into the pool and made a big splash! How like her to prolong the fun!

## Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc. Fiscal Year 2026 Older Americans Act (OAA) Funding Proposal

Service	OAA/State Award
Assessment	\$ 55,000
Attendant Care	51,500
Caregiver Assistance/Information	20,000
Caregiver Public Information Services	35,000
Caregiver Support Groups	8,000
Case Management	7,951
Congregate Meals	450,428
Coordination	20,000
Home Delivered meals	673,469
Homemaker	32,000
Information & Assistance	97,000
Legal Assistance	19,000
Physical Fitness & Exercise	21,862
Program Development	12,000
Respite	22,814
Transportation	98,800
<b>Total FY 2026 OAA Allocation</b>	<b>\$ 1,624,824</b>





## Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging—Helping Older Adults since 1976

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging is releasing our Area Plan for Federal Fiscal Years 2026 through 2029 for the 30-day public comment period of 7/18/2025 through 8/19/2025. Please take an opportunity to review our Area Plan at [www.jhawkaaa.org](http://www.jhawkaaa.org) and provide feedback and comments to [reporting@jhawkaaa.org](mailto:reporting@jhawkaaa.org). You may also view a copy of our plan at our office.

We have almost 50 years experience administering and coordinating services for older adults. As the population has changed over time – with people living longer but facing chronic illness and frailty – JAAA services have evolved to meet these new and more challenging needs. JAAA strives to maximize service potential and avoid duplication of effort, while also collaborating with other groups to sponsor events of interest to older adults and their caregivers. The mission of JAAA – to make it easier for older persons to live independently in the comfort of their own surroundings – is not only cost effective, is the preferred choice for hundreds of older adults in Shawnee, Jefferson and Douglas Counties.

### Programs and services available to Kansas seniors

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (JAAA) has been assisting seniors for almost 40 years. JAAA can provide assistance to seniors and adults with disabilities needing various levels of support. JAAA will help individuals maintain their independence by providing programs and services such as information and assistance, in-home services, case management, and much more. These programs and services, among others, are available in Douglas, Jefferson and Shawnee Counties in Kansas. If you do not live in these three counties you may find help through an Area Agency on Aging in your county.

### JAAA can help if you

Are overwhelmed with caring for a loved one?  
Need information about community transportation?  
Are looking for options on improving your health?  
Are becoming overwhelmed with daily tasks?  
Are looking for education opportunities?

Have recently lost your health insurance and are looking to replace it?

Are looking for housing options?  
Are considering nursing home or assisted living placement?  
Are looking for volunteer or social opportunities?  
Are burdened financially with the cost of prescription drugs?  
Have questions about Medicare or Medicaid?

**Please let us help you or a loved one.**