

# Amazing Aging!

For Seniors and Those Who Love Them

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc. • July/August 2003  
JAAA • 1720 SW Topeka Blvd. • Topeka, KS 66612 • Phone: 785-235-1367

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## Jayhawk Area Agency

### on Aging:

- Is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization
- Advocates on aging issues, builds community partnerships and implements programs to help seniors live independent and dignified lives in Douglas, Jefferson and Shawnee counties in Kansas to help seniors live independent and dignified lives
- Is funded by tax-deductible contributions, federal funds, the Kansas Health Foundation, 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

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## From the Executive Director's Desk

### Separate House and Senate Prescription Drug Bills Go to Conference After 4th of July Recess

As you are probably aware, the House and Senate recently passed separate bills that would add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. When Congress reconvenes after the July 4th Recess, select members of the House and Senate will be appointed to a "conference committee" to resolve the differences in the two bills and develop a unified measure that both chambers would then have to pass. Both the House and Senate bills fall short on providing meaningful relief to Medicare beneficiaries from prescription drug expenses, but there is opportunity while the bills are "in conference" to improve the legislation.

There are many serious gaps in both the Senate and House Prescription Drug bills that must be addressed. Neither the House or Senate prescription drug plans are as generous as seniors might be expecting. For example, if an individual's income is over approximately \$14,000 and has out-of-pocket expenses of less than approximately \$1,200 (in the Senate bill) and \$800 (In the House bill), there would be no benefits from either plan. There are many other gaps in the proposed bills that would negatively affect millions of seniors in our country.

All citizens need to follow this issue as well as many others that affect seniors. **It is not too late to be a catalyst for change in both the House and Senate Bills, forcing our elected officials to go back the drawing board and design bills that are fair and equitable to seniors.**

#### What you can do:

Use this opportunity to become a volunteer advocate on behalf of elders, or, if you have already made your voice heard, please continue to speak out for seniors. Talk with your legislators about the concerns you have with the prescription drug bills that recently passed in the House and Senate, as well as any other concerns you have about issues affecting seniors.

We will continue to advocate on the needs of our seniors in Shawnee, Jefferson and Douglas counties, keeping you informed about issues that affect you. Thank for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Marie C. Russo*

## Staying Hopeful Amid the Obstacles



Fred Breedlove is a hopeful man, in spite of all the obstacles he encounters while trying to lead his life. His resemblance to a certain fictitious

character (a.k.a. Santa Claus) fits him, as he is a generally good-natured, happy person. Also known by the Kansas City VA hospital staff as “The Miracle Man,” Fred has had more than his share of trials - many of which should have caused him to lose more than his right leg in 1997 due to an infection that would not heal. Behind that twinkle in his eye is a glint of determination that has kept him alive for many years.

In the process of locating the source of the lack of circulation in his leg, doctors found a severe arterial blockage in his lower bowel. When doctors attempted to remove the blockage, Fred’s lower bowel ruptured. Thirteen hours of surgery followed. After being in a coma for two months, “The Miracle Man” woke up. What he didn’t know, however, was that he was missing his right leg. “The doctors told my wife and sister not to tell me about my leg, and the nurses were told to let me figure it out on my own.” The shock of losing his leg after going in for what was considered a serious but routine surgery to remove blockages was hard to take. But Fred accepted his situation and moved on to the next phase of his life, which has been his way of doing things from the very beginning.

Fred served in the Navy from 1951 to 1955, and then joined the Naval Reserve. Fred attempted to join the Navy at the age of 16,

“because I felt I was needed to help with [the Korean War effort],” but had to get his father’s permission to join, “and he wouldn’t let me do it unless I moved back home until I turned 17”.

After discharge from the Navy in 1955, Fred became a truck driver, and left the trucking business in 1986. After that, Fred drove school buses until he had to go on disability due to the poor circulation in his leg. “The doctors never did figure out what exactly caused the problem in my leg,” Fred remarked. “One doctor at the VA walked into the room and asked me if I had spent any time in the Philippines, and when I told him I had, all he said was, ‘well, that explains it,’ and walked out of the room.”

Fred has received HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) through JAAA since 1997, and has been grateful for the help it has provided him. He continues to see physicians at VA, but cutbacks in his services have caused those visits to take place every 8 months instead of every 3 months. “My prescriptions are only good for 90 days, and I have to call in every 90 days to get them refilled, but some of them require a doctor’s permission, and I only see a doctor every six months or so, if I’m lucky,” Fred remarked. “And then when I drive all the way out to the VA to get my prescriptions, they’ve got them all confused, and act like it’s my fault that they don’t have it right.” He said he has had to put two VA employees on report for their rudeness. “I don’t ask for anything I don’t need.” But Fred has had to fight for services he was promised - as a veteran of the Korean War, as well as a tax-payer.

*(Continued on page 3)*

*(Continued from page 2)*

President Bush's plan to reform Medicare (*see front page for some details on the plan*) includes three options to Medicare recipients for prescription assistance. Many opponents of the Plan, which is up for Congressional review, say the options offered will not offer enough assistance to those who need it most.

Fred is not optimistic about the proposed options, as none of them would give him much relief. "My prescription drugs currently cost me \$7.00 each, and I have 13 different prescriptions. I just heard from another vet that [the cost] will go up to \$13.00 each very soon. That's almost double what I'm paying now. And this [Medicare plan] has a deductible that's more than what I already pay. How is that going to help me?" He may be forced to go without some of his prescriptions just to make ends meet.

The only correspondence he has recently

received from the VA was a notice of cancellation of his August doctor's appointment. No explanation was given as to why the appointment - eight months after the last one - was cancelled.

Fortunately for Fred, he has terrific support from his wife and his sister-in-law, who share in caring for Fred on a round-the-clock basis. Without their help and the services he receives from JAAA, Fred's medical condition would force him to be in a nursing home. "If I go into a nursing home, I won't live. I don't want to."

Despite the many obstacles he has and continues to face, Fred Breedlove will continue to hold onto hope, and do whatever it takes to live the way he wants - on his terms.

*- resources from National Public Radio provided facts on the Medicare Reform Bill for this article.*

### ***Nominations Sought for Kansas Older Worker and Employer Awards***

Nominations are being sought for the 2003 Kansas Older Worker and Employer Awards in September. This is the seventh year Kansas will recognize its older workers and those who employ them. The Kansas Older Worker and Employer Awards are sponsored by the Kansas Department of Human Resources (KDHR) and the Kansas Department on Aging (KDOA).

The agencies are currently seeking nominations for the Oldest Worker, Outstanding Older Worker, Employer of the Older Worker and Older Worker Best Practice. The winners will be recognized at a ceremony on September 24 in Topeka.

For the Kansas Outstanding Older Worker Award, the nominee must be 55 years of age or older and demonstrate outstanding qualities of leadership, dedication and commitment.

The Kansas Employer of the Year is for businesses in the private and non-profit sectors. This award is for a business that promotes, recruits, retains and develops positive and friendly workplaces for the older worker.

Nomination forms can be obtained from [www.hr.state.ks.us](http://www.hr.state.ks.us) or by contacting Toni Wellshear at 785-296-1865. Deadline for nominations is August 8th. Please send to Toni Wellshear, Kansas Department of Human Resources, Older Worker Program, 401 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka KS 66603.

## The First-Ever Donna J. Kidd Award Pays Tribute to Outstanding Advocate for Seniors

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging honored its former Director and outstanding advocate for seniors at a reception on May 23, 2003 at the Governor's Row House in Topeka. Over 150 colleagues and friends attended the event to pay tribute to this highly-regarded woman.

The purpose of this award is to recognize an outstanding advocate for issues affecting the seniors of our community. In the first year, Mrs. Kidd was the recipient of the award and was recognized for her many contributions to seniors in various capacities over the years. After the first year, nominations will be solicited from Shawnee, Douglas and Jefferson counties and voted upon. The

recipient will be recognized at an award banquet in her/his honor, with Donna Kidd presenting the award.

Donna Kidd was the first Executive Director for Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging,

servicing Shawnee, Douglas and Jefferson counties. She remained in that position for twenty years. Mrs. Kidd was one of the founders as well as the first Executive Director of "Doorstep, Inc.," whose mission is to

provide short-term emergency services to Topeka area individuals and families in need. Mrs. Kidd currently serves as the Chairperson of the Shawnee County Advocacy Council on Aging, whose purpose is to

act as an advocate on behalf of the senior population in Shawnee County. The Shawnee County Advocacy Council on Aging makes recommendations for aging mill levy funds to the county commissioners.

"It was both an honor and a pleasure to host this event on behalf of Donna," said Maria Russo, current Executive

Director for JAAA. "I have a lot of respect for all that Donna has done. All of her work will have a lasting impact on our community."

The Donna J. Kidd Award has been established to honor Mrs. Kidd, as well as future recipients, for outstanding advocacy for seniors in the three-county area. Nominations will be taken for future award candidates beginning in January of 2004.



Donna J. Kidd and Maria C. Russo enjoy each other's company at the Award Reception



Joe Simunac, Chair of JAAA's Advisory Council, presented at the event



Over 150 friends and family participated in celebrating Mrs. Kidd's many achievements



Jocelyn Lyons, Program Manager, Sarah Williamson, Development & Communications Manager and Terry McDaniels, Caregiver Specialist organized the first-ever event

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## Annual Campaign Off to Solid Start

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A big thank you goes out to our supporters for "Home Is Where The Heart Is," JAAA's first-ever annual campaign to raise funds for the agency and its mission!

"In launching the annual 'Home Is Where The Heart Is' campaign this spring, the JAAA Board and Council have committed themselves to helping JAAA in its most important task: helping seniors in Shawnee, Douglas, and Jefferson counties remain in their homes as long as possible. Since this mission eventually affects all of us, we - and anyone who contributes to JAAA - are really helping ourselves as well. In this sense, the campaign really does 'hit home,'" said Shirley Harkess, JAAA Advisory Board member and member of the Development Committee for JAAA.

The following individuals and families have given JAAA's "Home Is Where The Heart Is" annual campaign to date:

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Abrahamson  
 Mrs. Doris Benedict  
 Mr. Alan Black

Carole Boggs  
 J.W. Drury  
 Mr. and Mrs. Lee Glogau  
 Mrs. Kay Houser  
 Mr. Fredrick Miles  
 Mrs. Leona Moeder  
 Ms. Carolyn Olson  
 Mr. Ray Olson  
 Mr. and Mrs. John & Carol Padilla  
 Mr. and Mrs. Fred Patton  
 Ms. Ruth Phillips  
 Mr. and Mrs. Roger & Geri Prather,  
*in memory of Annie Herrin*  
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sears  
 Mrs. Nancy Shaughnessy  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank Shrimplin  
 Mr. and Mrs. Mark Stafford  
 Ms. D. Elaine Taylor  
 Mr. and Mrs. John Taylor  
 Vintage Park of Baldwin City  
 Mrs. Marjorie Ybarra

We are most grateful for their generous support, and we welcome any future pledges of support for the agency. If you have any questions about this or any other forms of support available to you, please contact Sarah Williamson, Development & Communications Manager at (785) 235-1367.

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# "Home Is Where the Heart Is"

## 6 Volunteering -- the Gift of Giving!



America has a proud tradition of neighbor helping neighbor, and today this volunteer spirit is needed more than ever before. If you have finally won the right to pursue relaxation, purpose, and nobility, consider these reasons for volunteering your services:

- It provides a way to be useful, help others, and do good deeds
- The work is enjoyable and makes one feel needed
- Volunteerism is good for the heart. It increases self-esteem and competence as well as lessens stress and depression
- Studies show that people who volunteer live longer, healthier, and happier lives
- People are so in need of tender loving care that volunteering efforts will reap appreciation
- After a lifetime of needing to take, retirement can be a time to give back
- Some programs, like the Prescription Assistance Program (SHICK), respond to the greatest needs of seniors

A JAAA volunteer had these thoughts to share:

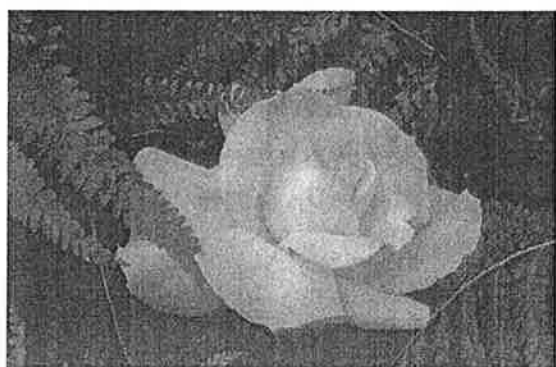
“They help me to feel younger and that they need me. I think that the staff are rejuvenated by the contribution of volunteers and they raise their own high level of commitment yet another notch. When I go home I can leave the heavy responsibility to staff for another week. When I open my front door I feel more enthusiastic about the remainder of my life. My commitment to volunteering adds another dimension to my interest in life in general.”

**Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging is in need of volunteers for the SHICK Prescription Drug Assistance Program, as well as volunteers for office support. Please call Diane McDermed, JAAA Volunteer Coordinator at (785) 235-1367 if you would like to give (and receive) the gift of volunteering!**

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### IN MEMORIAM

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The following individuals and organizations have donated to Jayhawk Area Agency on Agency, Inc., in memory of a Elizabeth (“Betty”) Knox. We thank each donor for his or her generosity, and for honoring Mrs. Knox with a gift for the future.

Elizabeth Knox Memorial

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas  
Susan (Luthye) Summers  
Lenny & Sandy Meier  
Jerry Frau



**“59% of Kansas seniors living alone did not think they could stay at home without publicly funded services.”**

*- University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, Office of Aging and Long Term Care, July, 2002*

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging provides a wide variety of in-home services, helping seniors live independent and dignified lives.

Send your tax-deductible donation today.

For more information, call 785-235-1367.

Thank you for your support!

## Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

Yes, I will support programs that help seniors live independent and dignified lives with the following gift:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Check or money order only, please, payable to Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.).

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

**Please mail this form with your contribution to:**

**Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.  
1720 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka KS 66612**



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