

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**

Spring 2015



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



www.jhawkaaa.org

Our honorary chairs, Dale and Anita Cushinberry, are retired educators and volunteers with a passion for helping young people. See story on page 3.

A Message from Jocelyn Lyons, JAAA Executive Director

Celebrating 50 Years!

Fifty years ago, the Older Americans Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The Act established the Administration on Aging within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and called for the creation of State Units on Aging. Through several amendments we have seen the growth of the Act to establish programs such as the Area Agencies on Aging; Foster



Jocelyn Lyons

parent in the community, etc.

Many changes have occurred in the Act to address our aging society. When signed in 1965, the life expectancy age for men was 66 and 73 for women. Today the estimates are 76 years for men and 81 years for women.

But as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act, an Act that many have not heard of, I don't believe there would be a senior in this nation who would not stand and applaud in celebrating the 50th anniversary in the signing and establishment of Medicare, the grand health insurance program for the elderly!

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging,

just as the other ten Area Agencies on Aging in the State of Kansas and 600+ AAAs nationwide, offers a long range of long term care and supports to consumers in our planning service areas. One is Medicare counseling.

JAAA is pleased and honored that the Social Security Administration recognizes the value of our organization in having the expertise to provide unbiased counseling to eligible beneficiaries of Medicare. Our agency has seen a growing number of walk-ins requesting counseling and increasing partici-

pant levels attending our Medicare A-Z workshops.

What we know is America is an aging nation due to the baby boomer generation. It is estimated that by 2030 more than 70 million Americans will be 65 and older. That means 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 or older!

I wonder if our Congressional members in 1965 were prepared to look 50 to 70 years ahead to estimate. I venture to say not. But, on behalf of the Medicare beneficiaries, thank you and Happy Birthday Medicare!!!

Kansas Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Who doesn't appreciate fresh produce from local Farmer's Markets? In mid-May, JAAA will begin accepting applications and distributing checks for the Kansas Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. KSFMNP allows seniors who are 60 years or older and whose individual income is less than \$1,800/month to receive checks for use at Farmer's Markets in participating counties.

Douglas, Jefferson and Shawnee, served by JAAA, are participating counties.

Seniors taking part in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) or The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

automatically qualify for the Kansas Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Seniors who qualify receive a booklet of six \$5 checks which may be used at the booths of certified KSFMNP vendors at Farmers Markets. Certified vendors will have a sign showing they participate in the program. Each qualifying senior is eligible for one booklet per year.

In 2014, over 5,000 Kansas seniors received checks amounting to \$154,000 to use at the booths of 450 farmers. For more information on this program, you may call JAAA at 235-1367 in Topeka or 1-800798-1366 outside Topeka

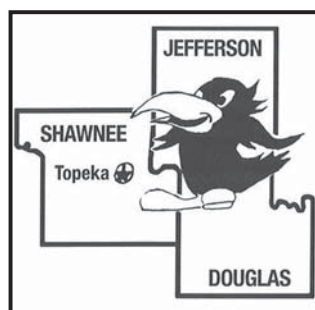


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You are encouraged to write us at:

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
2910 SW Topeka Blvd.
Topeka, KS 66611-2121
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Marsha Henry Goff, editor



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Visit us online at www.jhawkaaa.org

Honorary Chairs Dale and Anita Cushinberry

By Marsha Henry Goff

"Wherever there are youth, I'm there to help," says Dale Cushinberry. The same can be said for his wife Anita. Both are retired from the Topeka school system and JAAA is pleased to name the couple as honorary chairs for our "There's No Place Like Home" dance which benefits our Guardian Angel Fund.

Dale Cushinberry was born and reared in Topeka. He graduated from Highland Park High School in 1965, the same school he would later serve as principal for 16 years. He graduated from Emporia State, where he met and later married Anita, a native of Hiawatha. Dale, an all-America basketball player in college, was the first Hornet to score 1,000 points, standing ninth in scoring (1,352 points) and fifth

in rebounding (704) in ESU basketball history. The school honored him by retiring his jersey in 2014 at a game between ESU and Washburn.

Before retiring in 2010, Dale was an educator for almost 40 years: as an elementary teacher and principal, a middle school counselor and coach and a high school counselor, assistant principal and principal. He also taught in the education department and served in public relations at Washburn for seven years.

Anita is also a retired educator, who taught at Shawnee Heights and for Topeka 501. She taught Title 1 reading during her last eight years as an educator. Since retirement, her volunteer work has increased dramatically. "My volunteer activities since I retired deal

with church work, primarily dealing with the youth in our church as Sunday School teacher and Bible School teacher. I've been youth director, so basically I have worked with youth starting with our children. I also volunteer at the Rescue Mission with the Positive Parenting program. It started out with young moms and now we have complete families, the mom and dad and three or four children."

Dale, too, is a busy retiree. "I still stay involved. I'm on the Chamber of Commerce Small Business and Minority Business Council. And I have a program called 'On the Ball,' where I work with young males at the high school level primarily, but I've also worked with the middle and elementary kids who are not doing well academically, having discipline issues or what have you,

and just try to help them get on the ball. I work with them, set basic goals and when they reach them, there's usually a pizza party for them. I'm asked to speak a lot and I work with Eisenhower and Scott Magnet School in some of their mentoring programs."

The couple has two adult daughters who live and work in San Francisco, and a 10-month-old grandson. Their elder daughter is a fifth grade teacher, whose husband teaches at a college.

Anita and Dale have been members of St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church for over 40 years. She sings in the church choir and he is in the men's chorus. Together — as they have for the past four decades — Dale and Anita enrich the lives of Topeka youth and all those with whom they come in contact.

Blue Hawaii awaits you on May 9

Where do you plan to be on Saturday, May 9? Don your dancing shoes and a Hawaiian shirt and head to Great Overland Station where Elvis (retired KU coach Bob Lockwood) will whisk you away for an evening in Blue Hawaii. Honorary Chairs Anita and Dale Cushinberry, Topeka, will begin the event by dancing to "Lost in the Fifties Tonight/In the Still of the Night." Dale and Anita are retired Topeka educators and community and church volunteers. For more information about this exceptional couple, please see the above story.

JAAA serves three counties so we also feature honored guests from

each of the other two counties we serve: Beverly and Don Gardner, Lawrence, and Lynn and Chris Luck, Oskaloosa. The Gardners manage the exceedingly popular "Red Dog Days" exercise program which Don founded. Lynn Luck is a Jefferson County commissioner and the executive director of Jefferson County Service Organization; Chris is a retired rural mail carrier.

Aboud's Catering is one of our most loyal supporters and will again provide delicious food and drink, this time with a Hawaiian theme. Aboud's is simply the gold standard when it comes to cuisine expertly prepared and displayed.

As in previous years, Dr. Lanny

Snodgrass will fly in from his home in the Seattle area to provide exquisite piano music during the dining hour preceding the dance as well as a couple of special numbers during the dance. Dr. Snodgrass is a psychiatrist, but actually considered becoming a concert pianist. Once you hear him play, you will understand why that was a viable option as a career choice.

Elvis and the 1950's Secrets Band will perform beautiful Hawaiian music as well as their customary music of all tempos for dancing and listening. They also have some surprises in store for you. Hawaiian shirts are optional, having fun is not.

Our generous supporters have outdone themselves in providing extravagantly themed baskets and items for our silent (and sometimes not-so-silent) auction. Everyone who buys a ticket to the dance is given a raffle ticket to place in the drawing for one of the baskets. Attendees may purchase additional raffle tickets if they wish.

You may purchase dance tickets which sell for \$20 or 2/\$35 by dropping by JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, calling 235-1367 in Topeka (1-800-798-1366 outside Topeka) or going online at www.jhawkaaa.org.

We think it is the best food and entertainment value in Kansas!

Please visit us online at www.jhawkaaa.org

Guardian Angel Fund is unique

There are many good causes to which you may contribute, but none is quite so unique as Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging's Guardian Angel Fund. The fund is aptly named because seniors who are helped by the fund feel as if they have been blessed by their very own guardian angel. And they are. Their Guardian Angel may even be you.

Over the years, Guardian Angel Fund has met needs of desperate seniors that our other funding sources would not allow. Ask the mother how much the Guardian Angel purchased train ticket that allowed her to attend her daughter's funeral meant to her. Or the man whose beloved cat was declawed so it wouldn't inadvertently scratch him and set up life-threatening infections. Recently

Guardian Angel paid to exterminate bedbugs introduced into the home of a 79-year-old by a used couch.

Guardian Angel bought a dryer for a terminal cancer patient who had become too weak to hang her laundry on a clothesline. One summer, the fund purchased an air conditioner for a hospice patient whose home was suffocatingly hot and paid for furnace repairs during a cold winter for another senior.

We never know what impoverished seniors' needs may be, but Guardian Angel tries to be there to help. We cannot do it without you. You may contribute by filling out the form on this page. Any amount, large or small, means the world to those who need help.

Thank you so much for being someone's Guardian Angel.



We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly by embracing one another.
- Luciano De Crescenzo

*Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging's
There's No Place Like Home
All proceeds benefit*

Guardian Angel Fund

"There's No Place Like Home" accurately describes the mission of JAAA to enable seniors to age in place, to live in their homes as long as possible. We are grateful for your contribution because it enables us to better fulfill our mission. A great many seniors in Shawnee, Jefferson and Douglas Counties will live out their lives in comfort and dignity because of your generosity.

Yes, I want to help! Here is my check for:

\$5,000 to \$10,000

\$1,000 to \$4,999

\$500 to \$999

\$100 to \$499

Up to \$99

Over the Rainbow

Tinman with a Heart

Intelligent Scarecrow

Courageous Lion

Friendly Munchkin

Name as you wish it to appear in list of contributors. Please mail to JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS 66611.

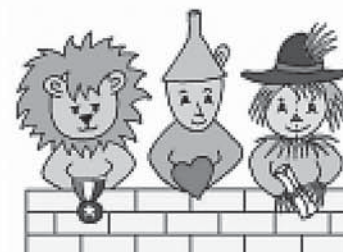
Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail



Your contribution to JAAA is tax deductible.

Zumbathon helps Guardian Angel Fund

Zumba enthusiasts Elizabeth Rincon and Amanda Sellers, JAAA Information Specialist and Information Assistant, respectively, came up the idea of hosting "Zumbathon" as a creative way to raise money for JAAA's Guardian Angel Fund. The event, held on Saturday, March 21 at Topeka's Eclipse Urban Lounge, attracted over 30 people, each of whom paid a \$10 fee.

Zumba is a popular Latin-inspired dance aerobic program designed to promote fitness. Mindful that not everyone is ready for fast paced exercise, Sellers explains, "We had Zumba Gold, which is slower paced and low impact for those who do not want the fast paced Zumba."

In addition to the admission fee, they raised money by raffling prizes and selling glow in the dark necklaces and bracelets for a glow in the dark Zumbathon, as well as water and sports drinks. The event

also featured a few vendors who paid a set-up fee.

JAAA's staff members recognize the importance of Guardian Angel Fund to the clients they serve and have been especially good about raising money to enable the fund to help more of those in need. Zumbathon is one of the more creative — and fun — methods they have used.

While Rincon and Sellers would like to host another Zumbathon, they currently have no definite plans to do so. "In the event we are able to host another Zumbathon," Rincon says, "we hope to attract seniors who may enjoy and benefit from the exercise."

JAAA extends special thanks to Zumba instructor Tamara McGinnis from Genesis Fitness, for leading the Zumbathon and decorating Eclipse Urban Lounge. Thanks also are due to Eclipse for sponsoring the event.



JAAA's Zumbathon fundraiser gets in full-swing.



Zumbathon participants strike a pose.

**WALK TO
END
ALZHEIMER'S**
alzheimer's association

SATURDAY JUNE 13th
9:00 a.m.

First Lutheran Church, 1234 Fairlawn Road

WALK • SPONSOR • VOLUNTEER

For more information:
alzwalkneks.org
785.271.1844

THE END OF ALZHEIMER'S
STARTS WITH
you!

Please call Kevin at (785) 841-9417 to place your display ad in the Summer 2015 issue of Amazing Aging! The deadline is July 15.

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging SR Magazine

Pick up your complimentary copy of *Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging SR* magazine and read about seniors living active and productive lives. The magazine is published annually by The World Company's Sunflower Publishing which also publishes *Kansas! Magazine*, *Topeka Magazine*, *Lawrence Magazine* and many other award-winning regional publications.

The full-color magazine includes profiles of individuals in the Lawrence, Topeka and McLouth areas and contains stunning photos and interesting articles. The articles in the magazine include: "A Child's War"—Lee Gerhard, a retired KU geology professor, recalls living through World War II as a young boy, seeing his favorite aunt and uncle serving in the military, fearing for their lives and for the security of his home; "Voice of Ages"—Two senior choir members, Lafayette Norwood of Lawrence and Eleanor Daniels of Topeka, talk about what singing in a choir has meant to them throughout their

life, how their voices have been affected by age, and how songs remain a center of their faith and well-being; "Bob is the King, and the King is Bob"—A profile of volunteer extraordinaire and Elvis impersonator Bob Lockwood, a former KU coach and instructor who continues dedicating his life to helping others while living a very active retirement; "Barnetts' Blooms"—Profile of Lee and Lora Barnett, working seniors in the Topeka region who began a mid-life career when they bought an iris and peony farm; side story on advice for seeking a second career as a senior and the benefits of having seniors in the workplace; "Senior Tours, Shawnee Co. Style"—Profile of the Shawnee County senior road trip programs with side stories on the best advice for senior travel.

Don't miss out! You may pick up a copy at JAAA, 2910 Topeka Boulevard, and at various locations in the counties — Douglas, Jefferson and Shawnee — served by Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging.

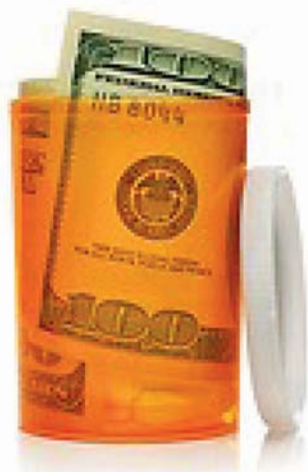


Here's a sneak peek at the cover under development for JAAA SR Magazine due out soon.



*Want to do something special for Mom on Mother's Day weekend?
For a night she won't forget, take her away to Blue Hawaii at
Great Overland Station where she will enjoy delicious food from Aboud's,
listen or sing along with Elvis, perhaps have her photo taken with him
and dance with her favorite child(ren) to the music of the
1950's Secrets Band and Dr. Canny Snodgrass!*

Are you on Medicare?



| MEDICARE | | HEALTH INSURANCE | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) | | | |
| NAME OF BENEFICIARY JOHN DOE | | | |
| MEDICARE CLAIM NUMBER 000-00-0000-A | | SEX MALE | |
| IS ENTITLED TO HOSPITAL (PART A) | | EFFECTIVE DATE 01-01-2007 | |
| MEDICAL (PART B) | | 01-01-2007 | |
| SIGN HERE → | | | |

Do you struggle to pay for prescriptions?

**Is your monthly income below
\$1,471 for a single person?
\$1,991 for a married couple?**

Limited resources?



You may qualify for assistance!

Contact Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging to speak with a trained Senior Health Insurance Counselor to determine what you may qualify for and receive application assistance.

1-785-235-1367

1-800-798-1366



What we learn from caregiving

By Michele Dillon

I come across so many caregivers who are caring for their parents who express frustration. It's not frustration from the physical act of caregiving but frustration at the lack of communication. Parents don't want to discuss the important end of life issues so necessary for caregivers to know.

The sandwich generations can learn from this. Let your family and close friends know your end of life wishes and make sure you have all the paperwork in place to support those wishes. Here are things everyone needs to have in their files and provide copies to anyone involved in the decisions.

Living will – a written statement detailing a person's desires regarding their medical treatment in circumstances in which they are no longer able to express informed consent, especially an advance directive. This document provides written clarification of your medical wishes in case you are incapacitated and no longer able to make decisions. Do you want to be kept alive by artificial means? If so, for how long? Do you want a feeding tube or to be force fed? These wishes are implemented if your diagnosis is terminal. These measures may prolong your life for a time but will not necessarily provide good quality of life. Other decisions may include the use of dialysis or breathing machines, organ donation or resuscitation.

Durable Power of Attorney



Michele Dillon

– This is the form that appoints someone to make decisions for you should you become incapacitated. The incapacitation may be temporary or more permanent. It is important to mention that this form does not take effect the minute you sign it but only at the time of inability to make decisions. If you are a POA for someone please make sure you continue to allow them to make their own decisions until they can no longer do so. Another thing to keep in mind is that the incapacitation may be temporary and your POA may only need to make a decision temporarily, like

after anesthesia or pain medication.

Have discussions on what your wishes are. How long do you wish to remain in your home and under what conditions? Any particular agency you want to use for in home care? Do not ask loved ones to promise that they will not put you in a nursing home. This can cause undo guilt. As much as we would love to meet the needs of our loved ones at home, circumstances may prevent that from happening. More communication means less stress in a crisis. Tour facilities ahead of time, then you will know which ones will meet your needs.

Ultimately, our goal is to live a long and healthy life. The majority of us will, but being prepared is important. It's just as important as that retirement plan we prepared for years back and that life insurance policy we purchased 20 years ago.

Medicare turns the big 5-0!

By Marsha Henry Goff

On July 30, 2015, Medicare turns 50 years old. While it is hard to imagine what seniors would do without the program, they once did, being dependent on their own or their family's resources when they required medical care. Beginning in 1945, President Harry Truman sought to create a national health insurance program for all. He tried again in 1947 and 1949 without success. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy recommended a national health insurance for those over 65.

It was not until 1965 that President Lyndon Johnson signed Medicare into law on July 30 at Independence, Missouri. Former President Harry Truman was the first senior to sign up for Medicare. He paid a \$40 annual deductible for Part A, which covers hospitalization and a monthly premium of \$3 for Part B, which covers visits to the doctor. Today, Part A is free of premiums for those who have contributed, while Part B costs most participants \$104.90 a month and a deductible of \$147. By the time Medicare actually began a year later, more than 19 million Americans age 65 and older enrolled.

Medicare was extended in 1972 when President Richard Nixon gave eligibility to individuals under age 65 who had long-term disabilities or end-stage renal disease. Twenty-five years later, Medicare Choice or Part C (now called Medicare Advantage) began. This program gave beneficiaries the

option of selecting an HMO-style Medicare plan instead of the traditional fee-for-service Medicare program.

In 2003, President George W. Bush greatly expanded Medicare when he signed the Medicare Modernization Act, establishing a prescription drug benefit. Part D coverage — for which beneficiaries pay a premium — is optional. Part D did not take effect until January 1, 2006 when beneficiaries began receiving subsidized prescription drug coverage.

The health care law, known as the Affordable Care Act, was signed by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010. The law mandated that Medicare beneficiaries receive certain free of charge preventive care services and health screenings, such as mammograms, and reduced the out-of-pocket expenses of Part D enrollees.

Presently, 15 percent of Americans, about 50 million people, depend on Medicare for their health insurance coverage. Between the years 2000 and 2030, that number is expected to double due to increasing life expectancies and baby boomers turning 65.

In an effort to keep Medicare solvent, seniors with higher incomes currently pay more for Part B premiums, e.g., those making in excess of \$214,000 annually pay a premium of \$336 a month. Even so, that larger premium amount is subsidized. It is vitally important for current and future seniors that Medicare will be able to celebrate many birthdays to come.

The important work of JAAA allows seniors to live life on their own terms

By Marsha Henry Goff

I am always surprised when someone asks, "Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging? What is that? What do they do?" Most Topekans and visitors to Topeka have driven by our building near the busy intersection of 29th and SW Topeka Boulevard. However, unless they have used our services or know someone who has been helped by JAAA, most people aren't familiar with the important work we do. I think we are the best kept secret in town.

Our mission statement reads: "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." Our goal is to enable seniors to age in place, to live in the homes where they are happy and content for as long as possible. I learned the importance of staying in their homes to my late mother and mother-in-law when, with the best of intentions, I mentioned to them that they might want to move into our rental duplex where they needn't worry about maintenance and yard work.

My husband and I purchased the duplex when it was brand new and kept it in pristine condition. In the backs of our minds we thought our widowed mothers, who lived within a half block of each other, might one day like to live side-by-side in a newer dwelling. Wrong! Both chose to stay in the homes where they lived; for my mother, that was the one-bathroom home where she and Dad reared four daughters.

Ray and I were grateful that each of our mothers was able to stay in her home until just a short time before their respective deaths.

My mother had assistance in place long before I knew about JAAA. She used an electric wheelchair and lived alone, something she could not have done without family help and the visiting nurses who saw her two or three times a week. My sisters and I were relieved when Mom agreed to get a lifeline device which allowed her to push a button for help when she required it. That lifeline proved a Godsend to her on multiple occasions. Mom lived life on her own terms and if she wanted to play solitaire on her computer in the middle of the night, she did so. In 1991, at the age of 74, my mother-in-law taught her how to crochet. Mom's first afghan, which she gave to me, won second place in the Douglas County Fair. That prized afghan decorates my living room couch and the red ribbon hangs over my desk.

Few know or care more about the needs of seniors than JAAA Executive Director Jocelyn Lyons, who has been with the agency for over 30 years. She served as primary caregiver to many of her family members, most recently her grandmother who died at the age of 104. Lyons has long recognized that most of today's seniors desire — and are able — to be active and productive. JAAA helps them by offering fitness exercise programs such as tai-chi, informative programs about maintaining health and quality of life, and support groups for those who need them. JAAA's CHAMPSS meal voucher program has been a rousing success

with seniors who enjoy eating out and socializing. We provide SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) where volunteers help seniors choose the best Part D and Supplemental insurance for their needs. We also provide a place for AARP volunteers to prepare income tax for seniors.

So what does JAAA do to enable seniors to stay in their homes? We assess their needs for nutrition, home health care, homemaker assistance and transportation. We offer support and respite for their caregivers. In addition to offering many programs of our own, JAAA is allocating an estimated \$1,336,858 in federal and state funds during the coming fiscal year to 14 providers of services in the three counties — Douglas, Jefferson and Shawnee — we serve. The majority of these providers serve seniors in two or three of the counties, while others — among them, Douglas County Senior Services, East Topeka Senior Center, Jefferson County Health Department and Lawrence Meals on Wheels — are specific to one city or county.

Allocating funds is one of the most difficult things JAAA does. The Allocations Committee hears lengthy presentations from prospective providers and then must try to fairly divide the funds among deserving agencies based on the type and number of services they propose to deliver. The Allocations Committee's recommendations are forwarded to the JAAA Advisory Council which studies the Committee's recommendations, then sends its own recommendations to the JAAA Board for a final decision. When the

Board approves the recommendations, the providers are notified of their allocations and are given the opportunity to accept the funds if they choose. Allocations are for the Federal fiscal year 2016 which begins October 1, 2015.

The providers, amount the Board has approved, services promised by providers and the cities/counties they serve are: Douglas County Senior Services, \$127,793, (information, home delivered meals), DG; East Topeka Senior Center, \$23,313, (transportation), Topeka; Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, \$582,424, (information, outreach, case management, assessment, program development, coordination, administration, CHAMPSS congregate meals, physical fitness and exercise, assistance, support groups, bath/flex items), DG, JF, SN; Jefferson County Service Organization, \$30,000, (information, transportation, outreach), JF; Kansas Legal Services, \$15,460, (legal assistance), DG, JF, SN; Lawrence Meals on Wheels, \$52,701, (home delivered meals), Lawrence; Meals on Wheels of SN & JF Counties, \$408,213, (congregate meals, home delivered meals), JF, SN; Mom's Meals, \$75,000, (home delivered meals with emphasis on areas unserved by other providers), DG, JF, SN; Papan's Landing Senior Center, \$17,374, (transportation), Topeka; Pool of Providers Contracted (A Helping Hand Home Care, Jefferson County Health Department, Prestige Home Care, Trinity In-Home Care), \$110,459, (attendant care, homemaker, respite), collectively DG, JF, SN; and Topeka LULAC Senior Center, \$6,061, (transportation), Topeka.

The father I didn't know

By Marsha Henry Goff

Editor's note: In last May's issue of Amazing Aging, I reprinted a "Jest for Grins" Mother's Day column to honor mothers. This year, I wish to honor fathers and veterans (as so many of our fathers served our country) by reprinting the following Father's Day column.

We know our fathers for all of our lives ... but not for all of theirs. While Grams told me what Dad was like as a boy — mischievous, adventuresome and a risk-taker — and Mom described him as a young man — caring, fun-loving and an avid sportsman — neither knew much about his service as an Army Ranger officer in World War II. They didn't know because, like many combat veterans, Dad didn't tell. Perhaps he wanted to forget or simply realized that those who hadn't experienced combat couldn't understand.

I am blessed that Mom kept Dad's wartime letters. In a letter to his parents from Anzio Beachhead in April 1944, he depicted the role of a combat soldier: "War cannot be described; only those who have experienced combat can have any conception of the term To the combat soldier who lives in holes like animals, whose existence is characterized only by the barest minimum of the necessities of life, and who has for almost a year and a half suffered day after day from heat or cold, in desert or in icy, muddy mountains, going without sleep, or bathing, or changing clothes for days, weeks and months, life has been crystalized into the expression of one desire — to return home!"

In October 1943, Dad wrote

Mom that he met two of his KU Delta Upsilon fraternity brothers, both serving with the 1st Division, in Oran where they had a big party before the invasion of Sicily. Sadly, the letter contained a postscript about his friends, who died in Sicily and whose names are inscribed on the tablets in KU's World War II Memorial Campanile: "They thought I was in a suicide organization. Now they are dead and I am still alive."

My quest to learn about Dad's military experiences began because my mother, his widow for three decades, wanted to know about those missing years. When she died in 2004, my mission changed. I now seek information for my sisters, for my children and theirs. And to learn about the father I didn't know.

Ray and I recently attended a mini-reunion of WW II Rangers at a beautiful resort on Iowa's Lake Okoboji. There I met 84-year-old Sgt. Les Cook — winner of Silver Stars in World War II and Korea and wearer of a Green Beret in Vietnam — who rides his bicycle 40 miles daily. Cook, with 1,004 parachute jumps to his credit, is an original Ranger who was trained in Scotland by British Commandos. He admits he was unimpressed when his captain called him in and introduced my father, who had joined the Rangers in Africa, as his new lieutenant.

The Rangers were fairly strict in accepting only single men, so the jury is still out on whether Dad concealed that he had a wife and three children. Personally, I think that Dad's fluency in German and knowledge of Italian, French, Hebrew and Arabic may have made

him a valuable acquisition in spite of his family baggage.

Les Cook was surprised by something about Dad that didn't surprise me at all. He said the captain told Dad to listen to his sergeant who had participated in the invasion of Africa and was battle-hardened. "When you think you're able to take over the platoon, tell Sgt. Cook and he will give it to you."

"That's exactly what happened," says Cook, "It worked out O.K." But he is still surprised that Dad, who at 26 was an old man for a Ranger, listened to and learned from his 19-year-old subordinate. I told Sgt. Cook that I grew up with this advice from Dad: "There isn't anyone, Marsha, who doesn't know something that you don't ... and if you close your mind to that, you will never learn what they have to teach you." Dad obviously was following that advice long before he gave it to me.

Loving and considerate, Dad

went shopping and bought a white organdy dress with a pink sash for me to wear at my 6th grade graduation ceremony. And he had my white satin ballerina slippers dyed red to match the ruffled tulle formal Mom made for my 9th grade dance. Compassionate and brave, he jumped into a lake to rescue a dog, apparently the world's only non-swimming cocker spaniel, that I had adopted and named RayGee after the boy who would later become my husband. A risk-taker to the end, Dad went to Abilene shortly before his death and talked someone into letting him ride a Brahma bull because it was something he "always wanted to do."

Perhaps the father I didn't know was the father I knew all along.

L. Lew Henry was an only child with no son to carry on his family name. That is why I use it in my byline. I think he would like that!

JAAA partners with PANT to provide temporary care for pets of clients

JAAA is pleased to announce a partnership with Pet Assistance Network of Topeka (PANT) to provide care for pets of JAAA clients who require hospitalization or temporary stays in nursing homes. JAAA will assess the situation and if it is determined that a client cannot afford to pay for the pet's care and no family member or friend of the client is able to provide interim care, PANT will provide funds for boarding and proper care until the pet may be returned to its owner.

April Maddox, JAAA Case Man-

agement Program Manager, recognizes the love that clients have for their pets, often placing the animal's welfare above their own. "A beloved pet is very important to the elderly and disabled individuals we serve here at JAAA. An injury or illness may force a temporary separation that is extremely hard on both the owner and the pet. I believe the assistance through PANT will provide the owner with a sense of relief, knowing the pet will be well cared for while they are not together."

Older Americans Month 2015: "Get into the Act"

Older adults are a vital part of our society. Since 1963, communities across the country have shown their gratitude by celebrating Older Americans Month each May. The theme of this year's celebration is "Get into the Act" which illustrates how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

The theme also reflects on the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Older Americans Act into law in July 1965. Since that time, the Act has provided a nationwide aging services network and funding that helps older adults live with dignity in the communities of their choice for as long as possible. These services include home-delivered and congregate meals (including CHAMPSS), caregiver support, community-based assistance, preventive health services, elder abuse

prevention, and much more.

By promoting and engaging in activity, wellness, and inclusivity, more Americans than ever before can "Get into the Act." While JayhawkAreaAgency on Aging provides services to older adults year-round,



Older Americans Month offers an opportunity to emphasize how older adults can

access the home- and community-based services they need to live independently in their communities. It is also an occasion to highlight how older adults are engaging with and making a difference in those communities.

Throughout the month, JAAA will be conducting activities and providing tips on how to access programs designed to enable seniors to live active, productive lives while continuing to live in their homes where they are comfortable and content. On May 9, we celebrate Older Americans Month with our "There's No Place Like Home" dance benefiting our Guardian Angel Fund.

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 or write to her in care of JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611.

50 years of Older Americans Act Get into the act! They did!



Dentist/Woodworker



Dancer



5K/10K Racer



Quilter



Volunteer



Beekeeper

In 1930, fewer than 7 million Americans — 5.4% of the population — were seniors. By 2009, those aged 65 and older numbered 39.6 million, a number that has continued to grow. By 2030, Americans 65 and older are expected to make up 19% of the population.

Seniors are not only living longer, many are living happier and healthier lives. They are traveling, exercising, volunteering and some are employed. JAAA recognizes the changing needs of our senior population. It is why we are offering new programs like CHAMPSS (Choosing Healthy Appetizing Meal Plan Solutions for Seniors) and tai-chi lessons.

We are also there for those who need help to continue living in their homes. It is a mission we take seriously. We are only a phone call away: 235-1367 in Topeka and 1-800-798-1366 elsewhere in Douglas, Jefferson and Shawnee Counties.



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