

Welcome  
Katie Friemoth



Hi, my name is Katie Friemoth. I grew up and live around the Neillsville area with my husband and four kids. I graduated from Mid-State Technical College with a Health Unit Coordinator degree. In my spare time I enjoy watching my kids in their sports, reading, kayaking, bow hunting and baking and cooking. I enjoy helping others and learning new challenges. So I look forward to my new role at the ADRC of Jackson County.

Protect Yourself with a Flu Vaccine

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

Influenza, aka ‘the flu’, is a serious disease. Thankfully, you can protect yourself and others by doing one simple thing - getting vaccinated!

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine every year (with some exceptions). The vaccine is especially important for people 65 years and older, those with asthma, heart disease, or diabetes, and people who’ve had a stroke, etc. These individuals have a higher risk of developing serious complications from the flu, including being hospitalized. While every flu season is different, a typical flu season will see millions of diagnoses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and tens of thousands of deaths.

The vaccine is the best way to prevent getting the flu and reduce the likelihood of serious complications if you do. Unfortunately, only about half of Americans get their flu vaccine each year!

Let’s address some common misconceptions about the flu:

1. It’s not just a stomach bug. Many people believe that the flu vaccine is for stomach flu – a stomach bug that causes nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. However, the flu vaccine protects against influenza – a respiratory disease that can cause fever, chills, cold-like symptoms, and muscle aches. The worst cases of flu occur when it gets in your lungs, which can lead to complications like pneumonia.

2. Don’t delay. The CDC recommends that people get their vaccines in September or October. It takes about two weeks for the vaccine to build full immunity. Delaying the flu vaccine could mean putting your health at risk as flu season begins.

3. Get your vaccine every year. The virus that causes influenza changes over time, and the vaccine is changed each year to keep up with it. Just because you got the vaccine last year, doesn’t mean you’re protected from the flu this year. Additionally, the protection you receive from vaccination declines as you get older, so by getting the vaccine annually, you’re giving yourself the best protection possible.

This year, protect yourself, your friends, your loved ones, and your community by getting vaccinated. You can get your vaccine at your local pharmacy, such as Walgreens or CVS, or at your primary care doctor’s office or another health clinic.

The flu vaccine is covered by Medicare Part B. If you have Original Medicare, you will not pay any out-of-pocket costs for vaccines covered by Part B if your provider accepts assignment. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, it must cover the influenza vaccine without applying deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance if you meet the criteria for coverage and see an in-network provider.

For more information, visit: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/immunizations-and-vaccines/vaccinations-and-older-adults> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevention/misconceptions.html> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm>

Screen Time Causes Concern for Some Older Adults

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

While many of us are familiar with concerns about too much screen time (use of TVs, tablets, smartphones and other technology) among children, some people are expressing concerns that older adults are at risk of becoming similarly tech-addicted. The reality, of course, is that the use of technology varies by individual, and technology has enhanced the lives of older adults in a variety of ways.

An NPR article (<https://www.npr.org/2026/02/25/nx-s1-5644991/screen-addiction-technology-elderly>) noted that most older adults use technology to keep current with news and get information. The use of tech also allows adults who can’t leave home easily or regularly to socialize, engage with the outside world, and find community. Of course, with the use of technology comes the potential for scams, misinformation, and addiction.

Business Insider’s

“The modern American retirement is online” (<https://www.businessinsider.com/retired-baby-boomers-spending-time-online-tech-obsession-ai-2026-6>) delves into some of the issues with spending too much time using technology. The article notes that older Americans spend over four hours a day using screens. “My wife gets a little bit jealous when I spend too much time on the computer,” Rezendes says. Prioritizing online activities can be harmful to our physical and emotional health and may jeopardize relationships with others.

Robot-assisted care has the potential to alleviate some of the caregiver crisis the U.S. is experiencing, and there are hopes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other “age tech” may help slow cognitive decline. Technology brings costs and benefits with its use, as this paragraph from the Business Insider article illustrates: “Study after study shows loneliness continues to grow (<https://www.bbc.com/health/technology/article/20250925-robot-assisted-care>)

<https://www.bbc.com/health/technology/article/20250925-robot-assisted-care>

of older Americans are addicted to their phones — one survey (<https://www.addictionresource.net/>) found that 40% of the over 2,000 respondents ages 59 to 77 felt discomfort when pulled away from their devices.”

Like anything, finding a balance is key. If you find yourself losing track of time and realizing you’ve been on a screen for hours, or you’re turning down opportunities to get out in the community and see people face to face so that you can spend time on your phone or computer, you may benefit from some adjustments to your screen time.

YMCA of the North created some tips for healthy screen use, such as setting limits and creating a schedule, prioritizing real world activities, protecting your eyes, and being mindful of screen use. Find more tips here: <https://www.ymcanorth.org/wellness/posts/finding-balance-managing-screen-time-senior>.

Community & Cuisine – Dinner After Five

Join us for an evening of food, fun, and friendly competition!  
Hosted by the ADRC's Senior Nutrition Program.

Must be 60 or older, or you may attend if with a spouse who is 60 or older.  
Suggested contribution of \$5.50

Registration Required: 715-284-3978

—Roll the Dice on Great Flavor—

Our evening will include appetizers, dinner, a short presentation on the importance of social connection, and some classic game time fun in between. Leave the evening with winning game-night ideas and a full belly!

Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> | 5:00 PM  
Jackson Co. DHHS | 421 County Road R, BRF WI



Questions?  
Give us a call at 715-284-3978







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RECHARGE

By Mary Damiano – Today’s Caregiver

Recharging your batteries is one of the most important ways to help your loved one.

**R: Rest.** One of the most important things a caregiver can do for the person they’re caring for is to take care of themselves. A caregiver who wears himself out, and keeps going 24/7 risks burnout.

**E: Eat right.** Take a cue from your loved one’s diet and take the opportunity to eat healthy things as well. Maybe you don’t have to adhere to such a strict diet, but eating right certainly never hurts.

**C: Communicate** your needs to others. Don’t expect anyone, even other family members to read your mind about what you need or what your loved one needs. Let people around you know the things that need to be done and that occasionally; even you could use a hand.

**H: Hydrate.** Drink lots of water. Water hydrates your body and keeps you energized. Take vitamins if you don’t get enough nutrition from your food.

**A: Accept help.** This can be the hardest thing for the caregiver to do, but it’s one of the best things a caregiver can do for their loved one and for themselves. When people offer to help, often caregivers turn them down because they don’t want to burden them or because they can’t think of something off the top of their heads. Get over the notion that the only way to get it done is to do it yourself. When you have a few moments, really think about the kinds of things that will make life a little easier. Then when people ask how they can help, you’ll be ready. When you tell someone something very specific, they’re more comfortable doing it, and you’ll get the help you need. Helping makes people feel good about themselves. Don’t deprive anyone of that joy.

**R: Respite.** Caregivers should make a point of getting away sometimes, to take a mini-respite for themselves. A movie, lunch somewhere, window shopping or just walking along the beach or through a park can be enough to get some distance, and come back with a fresh perspective on things.

**G: Get enough sleep.** This is often the hardest one to manage because you’re on someone else’s schedule. But sleep is one of the best things we can do for ourselves. Eight hours are ideal, but the concept of getting eight uninterrupted hours of sleep might be impossible. Try breaking sleep up. Get what you can in one shot, but take a nap during the day. A short nap can be very refreshing and just the thing you need to get you through the day.

**E: Exercise.** Anything will help. Walk around the block a few times a day when you have a few spare minutes. Try yoga, something that will exercise your muscles, yet relax your mind. Meditate. Spend a few minutes alone and quiet.

YOUR LIBRARY TO GO

offers materials to people in Jackson County who find it difficult to get to the library. If you are homebound for various reasons and would like a volunteer to bring items to you, register with Interfaith Caregivers at 715.284.7058.



Aging and Disability Services Unit

Lynette Gates - Aging and Disability Services Manager

Katie Friemoth - ADS Program Assistant

Sarah Denstad – ADS Program Coordinator

Darby Rush - Dementia Care Specialist

Megan Gerardy – Elder Benefit Specialist

Megan Olson - Disability Benefit Specialist

Lori Holmgreen – ADRC Options Counselor

Britton Unverzagt - ADRC Options Counselor

Ashley Gerber - ADRC Options Counselor

Britney Carrillo - Adult Protective Services

Tanner Patzner - Adult Protective Services

Contact the Aging and Disability Services Unit at 715-284-3978.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS WANTED

Please consider volunteering your time to drive Jackson County elderly clients to medical appointments outside Jackson County.

Our drivers volunteer their time but do get mileage reimbursement at the federal reimbursement rate.

This service pickups up elderly clients from their homes and transports them to medical appointments outside of Jackson County such as Lacrosse, Onalaska, Tomah, Eau Claire and Marshfield.

You then wait for them to complete their appointments and return them home. We try to line up drivers for clients at least 2 days ahead of time, more often earlier, and you choose whether the trip works in your schedule or not. This could be once a week, once a month, or as needed/available.



If you are interested, please contact the ADRC of Jackson County at 715-284-3978.

Discover Halloween at the History Room

Among the many files in the History Room, readers may be interested in is one under Celebrations titled Halloween. Especially of interest to those from the Hixton area is a poem published in the *Alma Center News*, 26 November 1914. The author is unknown. It’s a long poem, too long to share in this column. The opening lines go like this... “The stars were shining, the moon was high, the witches were out in a crew, Hallow’een started, ‘bout ten that night, and they seemed all that knew.” Names mentioned include Ole, Frank, Teddy’s Bar, Jim Chatt, and Waller’s yard.

Another article in the file tells of the Halloween prank in North Bend when two privies had been “deposited” in front of Patterson’s Store, another tells of the Halloween clothing collection of Mrs. Myrtle (Ben) Huntley, and an article from the Wisconsin State Old Cemetery Society tells the History of Halloween. Lots of good reading on Halloween!

Perhaps you are looking for a specific topic to read about. The History Room no doubt has a file on what you may be interested in. Hours for the Room are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 11-4:30 or other times by appointment. Just give me a call at 715.284.4112 #3 or email me at [m.woods@wrlsweb.org](mailto:m.woods@wrlsweb.org)

Mary Woods, Historian  
Black River Falls Public Library  
Jackson County History Room



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Medicare Summary Notices

*By the GWAAR Legal Services Team*

Understanding your Medicare costs can be challenging and can become even more challenging when trying to decipher a Medicare Summary Notice or MSN. If you have Original Medicare, every six months you’re mailed an MSN that explains how your medical claims were processed. You can also access your MSN online by logging into your Medicare.gov account. You should review the MSN because the notice contains information about your benefits, your out-of-pocket costs, and your right to appeal coverage determinations you don’t agree with.

Generally, the MSN will include:

- What services were provided
- What Medicare paid
- What you may be billed
- When the service was provided
- A count of how many days of inpatient or Skilled Nursing Facility care you received
- The provider
- Your deductible
- Your right to appeal
- The appeal deadline
- The benefit period
- It will state whether Medicare approved the service
- General definitions

To really understand an MSN, you need to have a general understanding of what Medicare covers and your out-of-pocket costs. If you are covered under Original Medicare, you will receive an MSN for your Part A, or hospital insurance, and your Part B, or medical insurance, claims. The Part D, or drug coverage, will be described in the Explanation of Benefits from your Part D plan provider and will not be found on the MSN. It’s important to note that your MSN will not include your premium costs and only reflects medical claims submitted to Medicare for coverage.

First, let’s look at a couple of terms that are used to describe Medicare coverage. The first term is deductible, which is a fixed amount you pay out-of-pocket for medical services until your coverage kicks in and Medicare begins to pay a percentage of the service cost. The next term, co-insurance, is the percentage of the service cost that you pay out-of-pocket after you meet your deductible. The amount of co-insurance billed depends on the cost of the service and the percentage Medicare pays for that service. The terms above describe your out-of-pocket costs, which can also be called cost-sharing. A link to a fact sheet outlining basic Original Medicare coverage is linked below along with a link to the Medicare and You Handbook for more information about Medicare coverage.

It is important to note that your out-of-pocket costs will be higher for services not covered by Medicare and services provided by providers that haven’t agreed to Medicare assignment. You should

review your MSN and provider bills to ensure your out-of-pocket costs are correct. For example, if your provider bills you for the entire amount of a service, the provider could have made a mistake when they billed Medicare or the service was not covered under Original Medicare. When you look at the MSN, you can see that the service was denied because it was a service not covered by Medicare. If you believe the service should be covered, you can appeal the coverage determination found on the MSN.

It’s important to read through the notice to ensure that the information is correct and that the provider billed the service appropriately. The MSN provides information on how to appeal and the deadline to submit the appeal. If you need help determining if the coverage decision is correct or help moving forward with an appeal, you can call your local ADRC or 1-800-MEDICARE.

**JACKSON COUNTY SENIOR MEAL SITES**

**BLACK RIVER FALLS**  
Home-Delivered  
(Monday through Friday)  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**MELROSE**  
**L & M CAFÉ**  
608-488-2611  
Monday through Thursday  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**MERRILLAN**  
**MERRILLAN CAFÉ**  
715-333-9200  
Monday through Friday  
11 am. to 1 p.m.

**TAYLOR**  
**TAYLOR GENERAL**  
**STORE & CAFÉ**  
715-662-2225  
Monday through Friday  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**MILLSTON**  
**TK’S 400 CLUB**  
Wednesday through Thursday  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**For Home Delivered Meals or more information, contact the ADRC of Jackson County**  
**715-284-3978.**

Finger Publishing, Inc.,  
Black Earth, WI  
608-767-3655  
is publishing, quarterly, 60 Forward. News content provided by the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jackson County.

Stay Strong as You Age: Why Protein Matters

*By Amy Gunderson, RD, CD, CLC*

As people age, maintaining strength and independence becomes an increasingly important part of staying healthy. One simple part of that equation is getting enough protein.

Adults over 60 generally need more protein than younger adults. Nutrition guidelines commonly recommend about 1.0 to 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight each day. For someone weighing 150 pounds, or about 68 kilograms, that works out to approximately 68 to 82 grams of protein daily.

Protein is important because aging can make the body less efficient at using it. This process, known as anabolic resistance, can contribute to the loss of muscle mass and strength that often occurs with age.

The gradual loss of muscle, called sarcopenia, can make everyday activities more difficult and may affect mobility, recovery from illness and a person’s ability to remain independent.

Getting enough protein can help older adults maintain muscle and support overall health. Protein is also particularly important for people who are trying to lose weight because adequate intake can help preserve muscle while losing body fat.

**Easy Protein Choices**

For those looking to add more protein to their meals, there are plenty of familiar choices.

Eggs provide about 6 grams of protein per large egg. Chicken breast is another lean option, with approximately 26 grams in a 3-ounce cooked serving. Fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel provide protein as well as omega-3 fatty acids.

Dairy foods such as Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and milk can provide both protein and important nutrients, including calcium and vitamin D.

Plant-based foods can also play an important role. Lentils, chickpeas, black beans, tofu and tempeh are good sources of protein. Nuts and seeds can provide additional protein and make convenient snacks or additions to meals.

Protein supplements, including whey and plant-based powders made from sources such as soy or pea, may be useful for people who have difficulty meeting their protein needs through food alone.

**Spread Protein Throughout the Day**

Rather than eating most of the day’s protein at dinner, seniors can include a protein source at breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Pairing good nutrition with strength-building activities, such as resistance or bodyweight exercises, can also help maintain muscle as the years go by.

Staying hydrated and continuing to eat a balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains are also important pieces of healthy aging.

Protein needs are not the same for everyone. Older adults with certain medical conditions, including kidney disease, may need individualized recommendations. Anyone considering a major change in their diet should consult a physician or registered dietitian.

For seniors in the community, the message is simple: making protein a regular part of meals can be one practical step toward staying strong, active and independent.

*Adapted from Today’s Dietitian*

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**Donation Designation Form**

I want to help the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Jackson County continue its effective community service to individuals with disabilities and older adults and their families. Please designate this donation:  
In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
I want my donation to go to the following program(s):  

☐ Home Delivered Meal Program ☐ Community Education & Outreach Programs

☐ Senior Dining Program

  
It is ok to acknowledge my donation in the 60 Forward: \_\_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_\_No  
Please send receipt to: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Checks should be made payable to: ADRC of Jackson County  
421 County Rd. R  
Black River Falls, WI 54615



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Supporting Loved Ones’ Mental Health

*Sourced from the GWAAR Legal Services Team*

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Positive mental health allows people to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

When it comes to mental health and others, what we say and how we listen matters. Here is some advice on how to help someone open up about their mental health:

- **Listen attentively.** Listening attentively involves your full focus and consideration. Listen for what the person is telling you, but also what their body language might be telling you. If you are able to refer back to something they said later on, it not only shows you were listening, but that you care about the person and what they’ve shared with you. Make sure to put away all distractions (phone, games, etc.) and face the person you’re speaking with. Look at them as they talk to you. Nod your head in understanding when appropriate, and gently inquire about something they brought up.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Make sure the conversation is not full of questions the other person can answer with a simple yes or no. Instead, open up a space for understanding by asking open-ended questions like: “How have you been feeling lately? What have you been doing to cope? What do you want to do about that?” You can also express your concern and encourage the person to talk about what’s going on by offering caring statements like: “You seem to be a bit quiet these days. What’s been on your mind?” or “You don’t seem like yourself lately. Is anything going on?”
- **Don’t assume or make judgments.** Opening up and reaching out for help can be difficult. If you make assumptions and judgments in response, it can make it even harder for people to express themselves. Don’t assume how a person feels, what they need, or that’s going on with them. Instead, ask gently for clarification when you need some. If your friend or loved one tells you things that make you uneasy, or that you might not agree with, do your best to set aside all judgment. Expressing warm-hearted concern and offering support should always be the goal.
- **Find a way to help or get help.** Sometimes, you might be able to directly help the person you’re concerned about. Maybe all they needed was to vent or have someone to talk to and help sort out their feelings. For some people, it might be helpful to send them positive text messages throughout the week or a brief telephone call whenever you get the chance. However, there are some cases in which the ways you can help are limited. If a person is suicidal, for example, then you need to get help from those more equipped to handle the situation. Ask your friend or loved one if they want to get help, and offer them the resources to do so. Assure them there’s nothing wrong with getting the help they need and that by doing so, they’ve taken the first step to feeling better. Sometimes, just hearing this will help lift some weight off their shoulders. Offering to take your friend or loved one to these helpful spaces, or to find the proper assistance, can go a long way.

Some tips for supporting positive mental health include:

- Connecting with others
- Staying positive
- Getting physically active
- Helping others
- Getting enough sleep
- Eating healthy foods
- Developing coping skills
- Getting professional help if you need it

Full article, as well as information on how to become a “Safe Person” available at:  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh/phlmhindex.htm>.

How to Protect Yourself from Identity Theft

*By the GWAAR Legal Services Team*

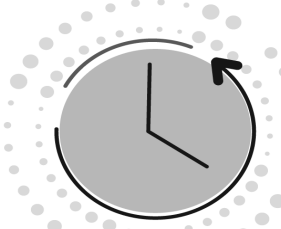
The news is full of stories of data breaches at retailers, insurance companies, and other organizations that have access to consumers’ personal information. It’s important to protect yourself from individuals looking to use your personal information to commit fraud. They may try to open new accounts in your name, access your bank accounts, or use your credit cards. This can happen if someone has access to any combination of the following information: name, address, date of birth, social security number, ATM pin, bank account number, credit card number, or Medicare number.

You might not realize that you were a victim of identity theft until you look at your financial statements or a credit report and see charges you didn’t make or accounts you don’t remember. Here are some steps you can take to prevent an identity thief from getting ahold of your personal information.

- Don’t carry your Social Security card with you or use your social security number as a password for anything.
- If you don’t need to save them, shred bills, bank statements, receipts, credit card offers, and any other items that have your personal or financial information.
- If you’re going out of town, have the post office hold your mail.
- Never give out personal information unless you have initiated contact.
- Sign up for the Do Not Call Registry at <https://www.donotcall.gov/> or by calling 1-888-382-1222 (TTY: 1-866-290-4236) from the phone you’re registering.
- Stop pre-approved credit card offers by using the Opt Out website at [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com) or by calling 1-888-567-8688.
- Check your bills, bank statements, and Medicare summary notices as soon as you get them to make sure there are no unauthorized charges. If there are, report them right away.
- Make sure you have updated antivirus protection, spyware protection, and a firewall on your computer.
- Check your credit report at least once a year. Many financial institutions recommend checking your credit report more often, like once every three months. You can get a free credit report every week at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>.

If you see anything out of the ordinary on your financial statements or credit reports, no matter how small, you should take action immediately.

- Tell your bank that your identity was stolen even if your bank accounts haven’t been accessed and your ATM card wasn’t used. Your bank can reopen your accounts with new numbers and give you a new ATM card with a different number and PIN.
- Contact your credit card company if someone has opened a new credit card in your name.
- Report the theft to police. Your local police department has to prepare a police report even if the identity theft happened somewhere else. Make sure you get a copy of the report for yourself.
- Tell the Department of Motor Vehicles if your driver’s license or ID card was stolen.
- Consider putting a fraud alert on your credit report by contacting one of the three credit reporting agencies: Transunion (1-800-680-7289), Experian (1-888-397-3742), or Equifax (1-800-525-6285). Once you place an alert with one of the agencies, that agency will send your request to the other two. Fraud alerts are free, and an initial fraud alert will last for one year. A fraud alert requires businesses to take extra steps to verify your identity before opening an account for you.
- Consider putting a security freeze on your credit report. A security freeze is free and will remain in place until you release it. In order to request a freeze, contact each of the three credit reporting agencies.
- File an identity theft complaint with the Bureau of Consumer Protection. You can file a complaint by obtaining a complaint form online at [www.datcp.wi.gov](http://www.datcp.wi.gov) or by calling 1-800-422-7128.



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Saving  
Time Ends  
November 1, 2026

Jackson County Mini Bus

Out-of-Town Trips

Third Friday every other month - Tomah (\$5.00)

8:00 a.m. – Leave Black River Falls

Walmart, Aldi, Goodwill, Dollar Tree, Lunch

2:15 p.m. – Return to Black River Falls

Third Friday every other month - Eau Claire (\$5.00)

8:00 a.m. – Leave Black River Falls

9:30 a.m. – Kohl’s, Goodwill, Target

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. – Oak Wood Mall

2:00 p.m. - Family Restaurant - Osseo

2:30 p.m. – Return to Black River Falls

Please call 715-284-4301, ext. 391 to set up a ride and give two days notice.

Book Recommendation:  
The Blue Zones Secret for Living  
Longer by Dan Buettner

*Resourced from Dan Buettner*

What can we learn from the world’s longest-living people?

Author Dan Buettner explores five regions around the world – known as “Blue Zones” – where people commonly live healthy, active lives into their 90s and even past 100. Through research and personal stories, he highlights simple lifestyle habits that promote longevity, including eating more plant-based foods, staying physically active, building strong social connections, managing stress, and finding purpose.

Rather than focusing on quick fixes, this book offers practical, everyday habits that anyone can begin incorporating into their own life.



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## Libraries Offer More Than Books

*Resourced from GWAAR Legal Services Team*

Everybody knows that libraries allow you to check out books, but they offer so much more. Many libraries offer not only physical books, but they also offer eBooks, audiobooks, computer access, internet access, passes to state parks, and many other items that you can check out or use for free. They may even offer social events like book clubs and author events. Everyone can enjoy these things for free once they get a library card.

The first thing you need to do is to sign up for a library card. Most libraries want to see a photo ID and something that proves your address, like a utility bill. The library may require you to go in-person to get a card, but some may offer online applications. Call or visit your library's website to ensure you bring in the appropriate items and understand the process of acquiring a library card. Once you have your card you can start to explore all that libraries offer.

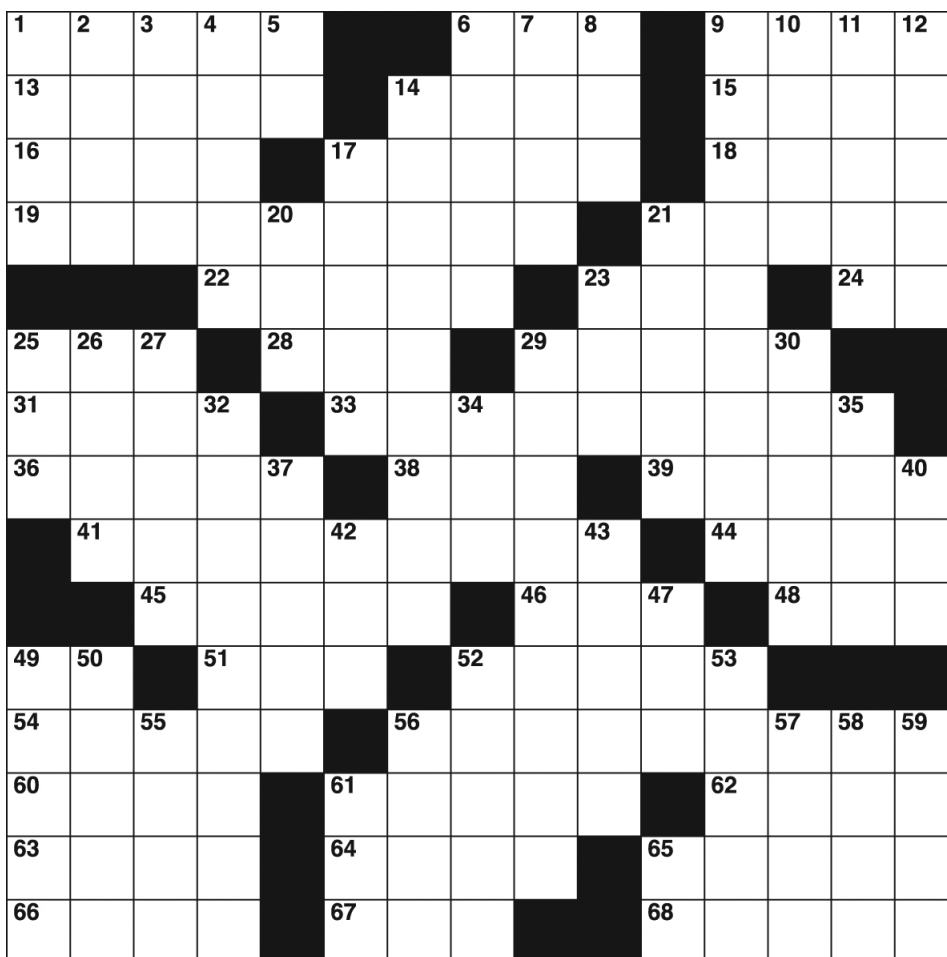
Libraries offer physical books, eBooks, and audio books. Some libraries offer online access to eBooks and audiobooks, which means you don't even have to go to the library to check out a book. Check with your library to see if they use Libby or Hoopla to check out books online. Your local library is a great place to read your favorite authors without having to spend money on books. Most libraries will even allow you to request books if you don't see them on their shelves. If you have more than one library in your area you may be able to request your books on hold to be sent to the library nearest you. This makes reading easy and accessible.

Some libraries have a “Things Library” that offers access to more than just books. Many offer board games and puzzles that can be checked out. Seed libraries may even be available for you to try out a new plant variety. Others may even have items like knitting needles, tools, baking pans, movies, TV series, video games, hiking kits, STEM kits, and even electronics like cameras or Wi-Fi hotspots. You can explore a new hobby or watch your favorite TV series without spending money. These items can be useful for kids or grandchildren who need entertainment. Just ask your local librarian what items they have available.

Wisconsin public libraries offer passes that allow you to visit state parks for free. Some libraries may also have passes to museums or other local attractions in the area. Contact your library to see what passes they offer and discover a new place for free.

There are also opportunities to socialize by attending classes, clubs, author events, and book sales. The classes and clubs may include learning to knit or cook, book clubs, or even writing classes. Many offer book sales where you can stock up on used books with fellow booklovers. Look at your library's calendar of events to discover a class or club you would like to try out.

Public libraries are a valuable neighborhood resource. You can relax with a book or check out a resource. You can relax with a book or check out a movie. You can even check out knitting needles or baking pans to try out a new hobby. Libraries can even be a source of social interactions when you try out a book club or class. Visit your local library today to find out what they offer.



## CLUES ACROSS

1. Bleated  
6. Snakelike fish  
9. Database management system  
13. Social evolution anthropologist Service  
14. American rocker Grohl  
15. Greek personification of compassion  
16. Negatives  
17. Rescued  
18. Self-immolation by fire ritual  
19. Assigns tasks  
21. Popular type of cigar  
22. Discounts  
23. The whole quantity

24. New York Giants legend  
25. Indicates before  
28. Lentils  
29. Extremely angry  
31. Body part  
33. "North Star State"  
36. David \_\_, US playwright  
38. Lower and raise one's head  
39. Private rendezvous  
41. In a way, improved  
44. A place to play  
45. Astronomical period of 18 years  
46. Automobile  
48. Something you can take  
49. A radio band

**Answers on page 10.**

51. Jaws of a voracious animal  
52. Short-billed rails  
54. Chinese province  
56. Shameless  
60. Horizontal passage from the surface into a mine  
61. Indian respectful titles  
62. Fail to entertain  
63. Dried-up  
64. Central Utah city  
65. Southern U.S.  
66. German river  
67. Necessary for breathing  
68. Put into play

### CLUES DOWN

1. Curved segment
2. Wings
3. Yellowish volatile liquid
4. Makes less severe
5. Debit note
6. Overhang
7. The nights before
8. Type of light
9. Lacking enthusiasm
10. Tattle
11. Some is "heavy"
12. One who is canonized
14. Indicates date and place of writing
17. "Peace" in Arabic
20. "Olaf" actor Josh
21. Fragmented rock
23. They \_\_
25. Advanced degree
26. Backside
27. Influential architect and design couple
29. An act of undue intimacy
30. Words from which later words are derived
32. 10 meters
34. Neither
35. Fungal sacs
37. The law of God revealed to Moses
40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
42. A promise
43. Challenges
47. British Air Aces
49. Large bank
50. Served as an omen
52. Cavalry sword
53. Vaccine developer
55. Belgian WW2 resistance leader Jules
56. Italian Seaport
57. Hip joint
58. \_\_ Clapton, musician
59. Insect repellent
61. Constrictor snake
- 65 "The First State" (abbr.)

# Your Voice is Needed, Take the Compass Now Survey

Black River Health and Jackson County Public Health are teaming up with Great Rivers United Way, health departments, healthcare systems, schools, and other community organizations for the Compass Now 2027 Community Health Assessment survey. This survey is done every three years to find out what the community needs and what health problems people are facing. Jackson County Public Health and Black River Health are asking the public, including you, to take the Compass Now survey to help plan community projects to create a healthier community.

Survey results are used to develop important programs, activities, and policies by local hospitals, health centers, and health departments. It is also used to apply for funding and grants, creating policies, and community development projects by community partners, and state and local leaders.

“The survey is very important in helping us understand what issues our community members are facing. This is why we want to hear from as many people as we can,” said Jordan Simonson from Black River Health.

The most recent Community Health Assessments helped shine a light on several challenges facing Jackson County residents, including housing and access to specialty healthcare.

In response to the findings, Jackson County brought a Community Health Worker into the community to help residents navigate housing challenges, connect with resources, and overcome barriers that can make it difficult to find and maintain stable housing.

Black River Health has used assessment findings to focus on improving access to specialty health-care, working to bring more services closer to home so residents can receive the care they need without having to travel outside the community.

“Having current, local data helps us understand what our community is experiencing and, most importantly, where we can make a difference,” said Mollie Severson from Jackson County Public Health. “The Community Health Assessment gives our partners a shared understanding of the challenges facing our residents and helps turn those findings into action.”

To take the survey, go to [www.compassnow.org](http://www.compassnow.org) or visit Jackson County Public Health or Black River Health to get a paper copy.

The survey is anonymous, meaning that no one will know who you are. After completing the survey, you can choose to give your contact information to have a chance to win a \$50 grocery gift card. The survey is available online in English and Spanish. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions, please contact Liz Evans, Community Impact Director at Great Rivers United Way, at (608) 796-1400 or compass@gruw.org [and/or optional local contact]

If you have any questions, please contact Mollie Severson, Public Health Strategist at Jackson County Public Health, at (715) 284-4301 ext. 353 or [Mollie.Severson@jacksoncountynwi.gov](mailto:Mollie.Severson@jacksoncountynwi.gov).





# Ready for the Block Party



Jackson County Aging & Disability Services participated in the Ho-Chunk Nation Block Party at the Sandpillow Baseball Field August 12. Pictured is Tanner Patzner, Adult Protective Services and Darby Rush, Dementia Care Specialist.

# All-Abilities Stroll



The 2026 All-Abilities Stroll was held Saturday, Sept. 12, at the D1 Community Center, bringing together 82 participants for a morning of movement, inclusion, and community connection. The event received support from local agencies, including the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) who hosted a rest station along the route.

## AT THE GRILL WORD SEARCH

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E M Z R A L E L I O A U D F F I G Z A B  
R O W D D O A C P Y P I E T V S C R K L  
S A P S S E E O K S F A D T O K I K A O  
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R U P O E B O W A F A W I D N U A U S E  
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Z R Y K B P U E R A L F E F Y L Z L K Z  
G V A L U T A P S A S L N M E D E G P I  
D M Z S E G A S U A S L L U F K A D W S  
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N L C W E E C R K F L E M A L F A M I T  
H L W E H Y L K A T C W R M N Y K G S Y  
Z H K A Y K A E T S R D B A R B E C U E

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

- BACKYARD  
BARBECUE  
BURGER  
CHARCOAL  
CHICKEN  
DELICIOUS  
FLAME  
FLAREUP
- GRATE  
HEAT  
MARINADE  
PROPANE  
SAUSAGES  
SEAR  
SEASONING  
SIZZLE
- SKEWERS  
SMOKE  
SPATULA  
STEAK  
SUMMER  
TEMPERATURE  
TONGS  
VEGETABLES

Answer on Page 8.

6TH ANNUAL

TRUNK OR TREAT

Join Us for a Spooky Halloween Celebration!

Date : October 30, 2026

Time : 3:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Venue : 421 County Rd R, Black River Falls, WI 54615

Substance Free Event

Pre-planning your funeral arrangements is one of the most important services we provide. Our licensed funeral directors specialize in seeing that all of your questions are answered. Knowing your final wishes are granted provides peace of mind, for you and your family.

CONTACT CARLY TO RECEIVE OUR PRE-NEED CHECKLIST OR DISCUSS YOUR NEEDS

BUSWELL  
TORGERSON'S  
JENSEN-MODJESKI  
SCHIEFELBEIN

funeral homes

CARLY GAYTAN  
FUNERAL DIRECTOR  
PRE-NEED COORDINATOR  
715-284-4321  
CARLY@TFHNORTH.COM



# Jackson County Interfaith Volunteers Welcomes New Senior Manager Shawn Callisto

Jackson County Interfaith Volunteers (JCIV) has announced the appointment of Shawn Callisto as the organization's new Senior Manager. Callisto will oversee operations at the organization's facility at 1451 Tyler Street, directing its mission to provide vital caregiving, transportation, and independent living support to residents across Jackson County.

Callisto transitions into the Senior Manager position with a uniquely well-rounded background that merges frontline medical expertise with business leadership. She holds a Master's degree in nursing with an emphasis on leadership and management, backed by associate degrees in both Human Resources/Business Administration and Marketing. To further her specialized expertise in community care, Callisto recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's New to Public Health residency program, which focuses on foundational public health practices and regional health leadership.

Her clinical and community health experience is extensive, spanning multiple critical sectors of care, including long term care, hospice, homecare, jail nursing, dementia care and public health.

Prior to her appointment as Senior Manager,

Callisto served directly within the JCIV organization as the Coordinator for Interfaith's *Time for You* dementia respite program. Her hands-on experience managing this specialized program gives her immediate insight into the challenges facing caregivers and vulnerable adults in the area. Shawn is a member of the Black River Falls Lions Club, President of Skyline Women's Golf League, and serves on the board of directors for the Skyline Golf Course. Shawn is a facilitator for a fall prevention program in the area and assists with the caregiver support group in Jackson County.

"I am thrilled to work in this new leadership role. I feel my deep

roots in Jackson County, my clinical expertise, and commitment to our community can help lead our operations and strengthen our volunteer networks."

As Senior Manager, Callisto will work closely with regional partners like the ADRC and local health services to address expanding care needs across the county. Community members and supporters are encouraged to welcome Callisto to her new post. For those interested in volunteering or learning more about the services offered, inquiries can be directed to the Jackson County Interfaith Volunteers facility in Black River Falls.



Shawn Callisto



# Preserving fruits and veggies



On August 20th, the ADRC hosted the quarterly Community & Cuisine: Dinner after 5 with the focus on preserving the harvest. Arlena Schott, who is the organizer for the Trempealeau County farmers market and an avid canning/preserving enthusiast, was our guest speaker for the night. Arlena gave us tips and tricks on how to preserve all kinds of fruits and veggies. She did a great demonstration on how to cut certain produce and even gave that produce away that was grown from her own garden. Thank you to all who were able to join us, and thank you again to Arlena Schott for being a great speaker at our Community & Cuisine: Dinner after 5! We look forward to seeing you at our next one!

# Apple Pie Bread

## Ingredients:

- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup plain whole-milk Greek Yogurt
- 2 large eggs
- 2/3 c up unsweetened applesauce
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 7 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted, divided
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, plus 1 Tbsp, divided
- 3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. apple pie spice
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 large Granny Smith apple, diced (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 3 Tbsp. light brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Coat a 9-by5-inch loaf pan with baking spray. Sitr granulated sugar, yogurt and eggs together in a large bowl until well combined. Add applesauce, vanilla and 6 Tbsp. melted butter; stir well to combine and set aside.

Whisk 1 cup all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, baking soda, apple pie spice and salt in a medium bowl. Add chopped apple and stir until the pieces are evenly coated. Add the flour-apple mixture to the egg mixture; stir until just combined. Spoon into the prepared loaf pan.

Combine walnuts, brown sugar, cinnamon and the remaining 1 Tbsp. each melted butter and all-purpose flour in a small bowl. Sprinkle evenly on the batter in the pan.

Bake until a wooden pick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean, 55 to 60 minutes. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes. Gently turn out onto a wire rack; let cool completely, about 1 hour.

*This easy everyday apple-pie bread makes a great breakfast on the go with a cup of coffee. The fragrant spices typical of apple pie and the tender bits of baked apple inside also make it worthy as a healthy after-dinner dessert. Enjoy it warm from the oven with a pat of butter or cream cheese or keep it on your counter for a tasty treat during the week.*



# Welcome to...

# PINE VIEW

# TERRACE



## Enjoy the comfort and convenience of the Pine View Terrace lifestyle!

- Spacious and private one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments designed with today's 65+ generation in mind.
- Freedom to live your life with the security of knowing you have a team of experienced caregivers onsite 24/7 who are always "there" for optional personal care services or should you find yourself needing emergency assistance.

**Learn how life at Pine View Terrace is filled with opportunities to create purpose, fulfillment and friendships with added peace of mind for you and your loved ones.**

**For information, to join our waiting list, or to schedule a tour, please contact 715-284-7077**

404 County Road R • Black River Falls, WI 54615



# Always Protecting Someone



**Britney Carrillo**



**Tanner Patzner**

**Jackson County Adult Protective Services**

## Wisconsin’s New Next-of-Kin Decision Making Act Makes Health Care Power of Attorney Documents All the More Important

By O’Leary-Guth Law Office, S.C.

Don’t let Wisconsin’s new Next-of-Kin Decision Making Act lull you into a false sense of security. Not only does it only apply in narrow circumstances, it could also give someone power over you who you would NEVER want to make health care decisions for you. Having up to date power of attorney documents is the best way to avoid unintended consequences, AND you must ensure your primary physicians actually have copies of your current power of attorney for health care documents on file.

**What happened?** 2025 Wisconsin Act 115 (the “Act”) took effect June 1, 2026. The Act permits hospitals to select and allow the next-of-kin of an incapacitated individual (who does not have power of attorney for health care documents) to consent to the transfer and admission to a nursing facility or community based residential facility directly from an inpatient hospital admission. It also allows the person selected by the hospital to make health care decisions for the incapacitated individual while they are in the facility.

**Who does the hospital choose from?** Hospitals can select a decisionmaker based on a hierarchical list of individuals in the following order of priority:

- Spouse or domestic partner;
- Adult child;
- Parent;
- Sibling;
- Grandparent; or
- Close friend.

**Who does this impact?** The next-of-kin decision making aspects of the Act only impact incapacitated individuals who do not have valid power of attorney for health care documents and need to be transferred from a hospital to a facility.

However, if the hospital cannot immediately locate your power of attorney for health care documents, a decisionmaker could be appointed in an emergency situation before the power of attorney documents for health care are found.

**How long does the decision-making authority last?** The decisionmaker may make health care decisions for the incapacitated individual until any of the following occurs:

- A court appoints a guardian for the incapacitated individual;
- The incapacitated individual is discharged to a setting that is not a qualified facility;
- Power of attorney for health care documents

are identified that were not identified at the time the decisionmaker was appointed; or

- The individual is determined to no longer be incapacitated.

**Why was the Act passed?** The Act aims to reduce delays in moving incapacitated individuals from a hospital to a facility without requiring a petition for guardianship by allowing hospitals to rely on next-of-kin decisionmakers when an incapacitated individual has not designated an agent in a power of attorney for health care.

**Does this mean powers of attorney for health care aren’t as important?** The Act should not be relied on as a substitute for having power of attorney for health care documents because it does not apply to all circumstances or health care decisions.

**What do the critics say?** Critics of the Act have expressed concerns that the Act does not go far enough to provide the incapacitated individual with the same protection they would receive if guardianship and protective placement petitions were required to be filed prior to transferring the individual to a facility.

**Are there other important changes made by the Act?** The Act also includes a change to who can determine incapacity. Previously, either two physicians or one physician and one psychologist were required to declare someone incapacitated. Under the Act, a person can now be declared incapacitated by either two physicians or one physician and one psychologist, registered nurse, or physician’s assistant.

**Conclusion:** The Act will help hospitals move patients to nursing facilities more quickly and easily. However, it does not eliminate the importance of having power of attorney documents. In fact, documents are all the more important to avoid hospitals appointing a decisionmaker you would not want.

Power of attorney for health care documents should be provided to your primary physicians and the named agents in the documents ahead of time to avoid any confusion or delays in an emergency circumstance. We recommend following up with your physicians regularly to confirm what is on file for your power of attorney for health care in the hospital’s records.



## Groceries to Go

Jackson County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers will continue to partner with Hansen’s IGA to deliver Groceries to Go to the elderly.

Instead of calling Hansen’s you should have your order ready when you call Interfaith on Tuesday. Interfaith will email the orders to Hansen’s to save time and groceries will still be delivered on Wednesday.

### Maple Glaxed Pork Chops with Apples

Ingredients:

- 2 bone-in pork chops
- 1 sliced honeycrisp apple
- 1 Tablespoon butter
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup
- Pinch of dried sage

Melt butter in a cast-iron skillet over medum-high heat. Sear the seasoned pork chops for 4 mmutes per side until golden brown. Remove chops, ad sliced apples and maple syrup to the pan, and cook until tender. Spoon the warm apples over the pork.



### Jackson County Mini Bus Schedule

Rider costs: Round Trip cost from the villages is \$3.00  
Within the City of Black River Falls the cost is \$1.00

2 stops: Walmart and Hansen’s IGA  
1 hour stop at each location

Approximate Pick-up Times:

**Tuesday:**

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Melrose           | 8:30 a.m. |
| Black River Falls | 9:15 a.m. |

**Wednesday:**

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| Hatfield    | 8:15 a.m. |
| Merrillan   | 8:45 a.m. |
| Alma Center | 9:00 a.m. |

**Thursday:**

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Hixton            | 8:15 a.m. |
| Taylor            | 8:30 a.m. |
| Black River Falls | 9:00 a.m. |

**All ride pick-up times are approximate depending on ridership for the day.**

Please call 715-284-4301, ext.391 to set up a ride and give two days notice.

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### Interfaith Volunteers

Open  
Tuesdays &  
Thursdays  
10:00AM -  
3:00 PM



time for you  
RESPIRE PROGRAM

A respite day program for those experiencing memory loss that provides stimulating activites and social interactions while giving caregivers time for you.

For more information or to schedule an intake visit, call Interfaith at **715-284-7058**  
1451 Tyler St., Black River Falls, WI 54615  
www.jcivc.org • interfaith@jcivc.org



FROM THE  
DESK OF THE  
VETERANS  
SERVICE  
OFFICE



Hunter Rudnick  
Jackson County  
Veterans Service Officer

You May Be Surprised by What  
VA Health Care Can Provide

Most people know the VA health care system provides many of the medical services you would expect, including primary care, mental health, optometry, cardiology, dermatology, neurology, physical therapy, podiatry, respiratory care and prosthetics. But what many Veterans do not realize is just how many other services and items may be available through VA health care.

Hearing aids and glasses are probably two of the most common things Veterans ask our office about. Depending on a Veteran’s medical needs and eligibility, the VA may also provide orthotic shoe inserts, diabetic shoes and other medical equipment.

For Veterans with mobility issues, the VA may provide canes, walkers, wheelchairs, power wheelchairs or mobility scooters. There are also programs that may help with medically necessary home modifications. The Home Improvements and Structural Alterations, or HISA, program may assist with things such as wheelchair ramps or other alterations that make a Veteran’s home safer and easier to navigate.

The VA can also provide personal emergency response devices, low-vision aids, adaptive computer equipment, prosthetics and other devices designed to help Veterans remain safe and independent. Veterans who use a CPAP machine may be able to

receive replacement masks, tubing and even replacement machines through VA health care. Chiropractic care, acupuncture and other approaches to managing chronic pain may also be available.

Another important benefit is VA Community Care. When eligible and properly authorized by the VA, Veterans may be able to receive certain health care services from approved providers closer to home rather than traveling to a VA facility. This can be especially helpful for Veterans who have difficulty traveling long distances.

**What About Eligibility?**

One misconception we hear is, “I don’t have a VA disability rating, so I can’t use VA health care.” That is not necessarily true.

VA health care eligibility can depend on several factors, including when and where you served, your type of discharge, toxic or hazardous exposures during service, household income, VA disability rating and other circumstances. Veterans who meet basic service and discharge requirements and had qualifying toxic exposures may now be eligible for VA health care as well.

Most importantly, you do not need to figure out your eligibility on your own. Even if you were told years ago that you did not qualify, eligibility rules have changed over time. The best thing to do is apply and let the VA make the determination.

The bottom line is that VA health care offers much more than many Veterans realize. If you are already enrolled, don’t be afraid to ask whether the VA can help with a medical need, piece of equipment or service. You may be surprised by what is available.

If you are not enrolled, or aren’t sure whether you qualify, contact the Jackson County Veterans Service Office. We are located in the Jackson County Courthouse at 307 Main Street, Room 103, or you can call us at 715-284-0225.

We are happy to help you determine your eligibility and complete the application for VA health care.

HAPPY  
VETERANS  
DAY

Thanks to all who have  
served for your courage,  
dedication and sacrifice







“60 Forward” is now  
available on  
cassette tape for visu-  
ally impaired  
persons. If you or  
a loved one is  
interested in  
obtaining a copy,  
please contact  
Interfaith Volunteer  
Caregivers at  
715-284-7058 for  
more information.

Check Your Beneficiary Designations!

*By the GWAAR Legal Services Team*

When was the last time you checked the beneficiary designations on your retirement and other investment accounts? When you sign up for a 401(k) or any other bank or investment account, you are asked to name a beneficiary who will receive the money in the account when you pass away. Many people fill out the form and forget who is listed as a beneficiary on an account. Some people even leave the beneficiary designation blank when they open an account.

Although many people make sure that important documents like wills are updated when necessary, they overlook beneficiary designations on financial accounts and retirement plans. If it’s been awhile since you checked, you may find that your designated beneficiary is not who or what you think it should be. For example, if you named a charity as your beneficiary many years ago, that charity may no longer exist. If you’re divorced, your ex-spouse may still be listed as a beneficiary. It is important to notify your financial institution or the administrator of any retirement plan of any changes in your family status. You should be sure to ask what documentation the financial institution or retirement plan requires to show the change in your family status. Your family status can affect the benefit you, your spouse, or your former spouse will receive. If you don’t choose a beneficiary or ensure that your financial institution or retirement plan has accurate information, your beneficiary may be determined by federal or state law or by the plan document that governs your retirement accounts. Whatever your beneficiary statement says will trump your will.

Fortunately, changing your beneficiary isn’t hard to do. If you do not remember who you’ve chosen as a beneficiary, you can request a copy of your beneficiary forms from your financial institution. You can revoke your beneficiary designation and choose a new beneficiary with a change of beneficiary form. You can also add additional beneficiaries. If you change or add beneficiaries, make sure that your account administrator has received the form and any other necessary documentation. Beneficiary designations are only effective if they are received by the account administrator before the account owner dies.

You should check your financial and estate plans periodically, including your will, power of attorney documents, and any beneficiary designations. You should also check these documents after major life events, like marriage or divorce. If you have any questions about your beneficiary designation, you should contact your financial institution. If you are in the process of getting a divorce, and either spouse has a retirement plan, talk to a family law attorney about what will happen to any pensions or retirement accounts.

If you have any questions about your own, a spouse’s, or an ex-spouse’s eligibility for payments under a retirement plan, contact the plan. You can also request assistance from Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights at (866) 783-5021.

If you have questions about any other documents in your estate plan, you should contact an estate planning attorney. To find an estate planning attorney near you, you can contact the State Bar of Wisconsin’s Lawyer Referral Service at (800) 362-9082.



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OPTIONS COUNSELING

By Lori Holmgreen, Britton Unverzagt and Ashley Gerber

Staying Safe and Independent: The Benefits of Medical Alert Devices

By Susan Krolow, SMP Volunteer Coordinator

One of the greatest priorities for many older adults is maintaining their independence. Whether it's gardening, shopping, volunteering, attending community events, or simply enjoying life at home, staying active is an important part of healthy aging. A medical alert device can provide an added layer of safety while helping individuals continue living confidently and independently.

What is a Medical Alert Device?

A medical alert device is a wearable pendant, wristband, or smartwatch that allows users to all for help with the push of a button. Many newer models also include automatic fall detection, GPS location

services, two-way communication, and 24/7 emergency monitoring. Some devices work only in the home, while others provide protection wherever you go.

What Are the Benefits?

**Faster access to help**  
If you experience a fall or medical emergency, every minute matters. A medical alert device can quickly connect you with emergency responders or a designated family member, reducing the amount of time you may be waiting for assistance.

Greater Independence

Many people mistakenly believe medical alert devices are only for those who are frail or in poor health. In reality, they are designed to help people remain active and independent while providing reassurance that help is available if

Peace of mind for everyone

Family members often worry about loved ones who live alone. Knowing a parent, spouse, or friend has immediate access to assistance can reduce stress and provide comfort for everyone involved.

Support beyond falls

While falls are a common reason people purchase medical alert systems, these devices can also be used during other emergencies such as sudden illness, chest pain, dizziness, difficulty breathing, or any situation where immediate help is needed.

Falls Are More Common Than Many Realize

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults age

65 and older. Each year, millions of older adults experience a fall, and even when injuries are minor, a fall can lead to a loss of confidence and a fear of remaining active. The good news is that many falls are preventable, and having a medical alert device can help ensure assistance arrives quickly if one does occur.

Choosing the Right Device

If you're considering a medical alert system, look for features that match your lifestyle, such as:

- Easy-to-use buttons
  - Automatic fall detection (when available)
  - Waterproof design for use in the shower
  - Long battery life
- GPS for those who spend time away from home
- 24/7 professional monitoring or the ability to contact family

members directly

Remember that automatic fall detection is a helpful feature, but no system detects every fall. Whenever possible, users should still press the help button if they are able.

Independence With Confidence

Using a medical alert device isn't about giving up independence – it's about protecting it. Combined with regular exercise, home safety improvements, medication reviews, and routine checkups, a medical alert device can be an important part of an overall fall-prevention plan.

After all, the goal isn't simply to age safely – it's to continue living life with confidence, knowing help is always within reach.

Dating as an Older Adult

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

Dating is stressful at any age, but for people who are older, it can seem especially fraught with anxiety. As the population of older adults in the U.S. continues to grow and gray divorce is increasingly common, dating can be a fun way to stay social and pursue intimacy. According to a 2022 Pew Research Center survey, 1 in 6 older singles in the U.S. have used a dating site or app.

While the prospect of using technology to meet someone can seem daunting, daters who are older have the benefit of experience and wisdom from past relationships that worked (or didn't work). In a Washington Post article, older adults who were single noted they felt more confident about what they wanted and didn't want in a partner. Technology can allow you to easily select potential dates who meet your criteria.

Some tips for online dating include being authentic, communicating clearly, being resilient, and having fun. More online dating tips are available here.

Looking to get back in the dating pool? Be honest with yourself about what it is you want. A serious relationship? Fun, casual dates? This can help you and your partner(s) make sure you're on the same page about things. Also, think about the timing. If you lost someone and are grieving, it may not

be the best time to jump back into dating.

And, as at any age, make sure to set your boundaries and prioritize personal safety. It is never okay for someone to pressure you into doing anything you don't want to do. Be cautious of potential scams or people asking for too much personal information too quickly. Trust your instincts. Get a second opinion from a trusted friend or relative if you have concerns about the direction an online

friendship or relationship is taking.

Not looking to get back into dating? That's okay too. It's a personal decision based on a variety of circumstances, so trust yourself. Plenty of older adults have decided they have no interest in romantic relationships moving forward. Be sure to seek out other types of social engagements though, as isolation is a concern with people who are older.

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# Handwashing Tips and Tricks

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

As summer draws to a close, and the fall and winter seasons start to creep up on us, it's a good time to remind ourselves about proper handwashing techniques. Washing your hands can help prevent you from getting sick and missing out on fun fall and winter festivities.

Many illnesses, including respiratory and gastrointestinal infections, are spread through person-to-person contact or contact with contaminated surfaces. Germs might spread from you or to you if you touch any part of your face with unwashed hands, prepare food or drinks with unwashed hands, or cough or sneeze onto your hands and then touch someone else or a common surface.

According to the CDC, some of the most important times to wash your hands are:

1. Before, during, and after preparing food
2. Before and after eating food
3. Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with a gastrointestinal infection
4. Before and after treating a cut or wound
5. After using the toilet
6. After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
7. After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
8. After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
9. After handling pet food or pet treats
10. After touching garbage

While washing your hands may seem intuitive, it's more involved than you think! The CDC recommends a five-step process:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or an air dryer.

It might be helpful to print out these instructions and put them in bathrooms at your workplace, place of worship, or home.

Don't want to hum the "Happy Birthday" song? Anything that lasts 20 seconds will do! For example, some people sing the chorus to Dolly Parton's "Jolene," while others recite the Lord's prayer twice.

Don't have immediate access to running water? You can use hand sanitizer as a backup. It might be helpful to keep hand sanitizer in your car and/or purse, so you always have it on hand. Just make sure it contains at least 60% alcohol and that you get between your fingers and under your nails, like you would with regular soap and water.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about/index.html>  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/handwashing.htm>  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/03/17/814221111/my-hand-washing-song-readers-offer-lyrics-for-a-20-second-scrub>



Have a Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year!



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# Emergency Preparedness



Cindy Jefson  
Jackson County  
Emergency Management  
Coordinator



## Fire Safety Important Year Round

As winter approaches and more opportunities exist to use heating appliances it is important to remember to use the appliances correctly. Making sure to use things correctly in addition to keeping in mind a few other safety tips can help reduce the risk of fire in your home. Below are some safety tips specifically related to fire.

- Make sure to plug things that heat or cool directly into a wall outlet. Devices such as a space heater or air conditioner (like a window unit) draw a lot of electricity. If you plug these devices into a power strip it is possible to overwhelm the strip which could cause sparks and lead to fire.
- When using a space heater make sure that it is equipped with an auto shut off both with a timer and in case it gets knocked over. A space heater is designed to help make a space more comfortable for a short term and is not a replacement for an appropriate heating device like a furnace or a fire place.
- Also, while using a space heater make sure to keep the area in front of it clear. Use the manufacture's guidelines but a good rule of thumb is at least three feet in all directions from the heater.
- Make sure that if you have a fireplace, it is in good repair. This means inspecting the fireplace yourself or having someone knowledgeable check it for you. Also be sure that the fireplace is clean to prevent a buildup of potentially flammable substances.
- When cooking, especially with grease, it is important to have a lid that can cover the pot/pan nearby. If the grease catches fire and it is safe to do so put the lid over the pot/pan to smother the fire. Leave the lid on until the pot/pan has cooled.
- Have a fire extinguisher nearby so that you can try to extinguish the fire if you feel safe doing so, if you do not feel safe trying to put out the fire evacuate the building and call 911. A fire extinguisher can be used with the acronym PASS, Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handle, Sweep back and forth.
- Have smoke detectors (and carbon monoxide detectors are good too, some units have both in one) in major rooms of the house/apartment. Major rooms include the kitchen, the living room, the bedroom(s) and at landings in stairwells. More smoke detectors can lead to a higher chance of being notified of an event which could help save lives.
- Have an evacuation plan for you and your family (including your pets). Having the plan of how to get out and where to meet once you are outside improving outcomes should there be a fire.

Fires are dangerous events that move rapidly. Making quick decisions (or having pre-made plans) help keep you and your family safe in the event that something does happen.





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