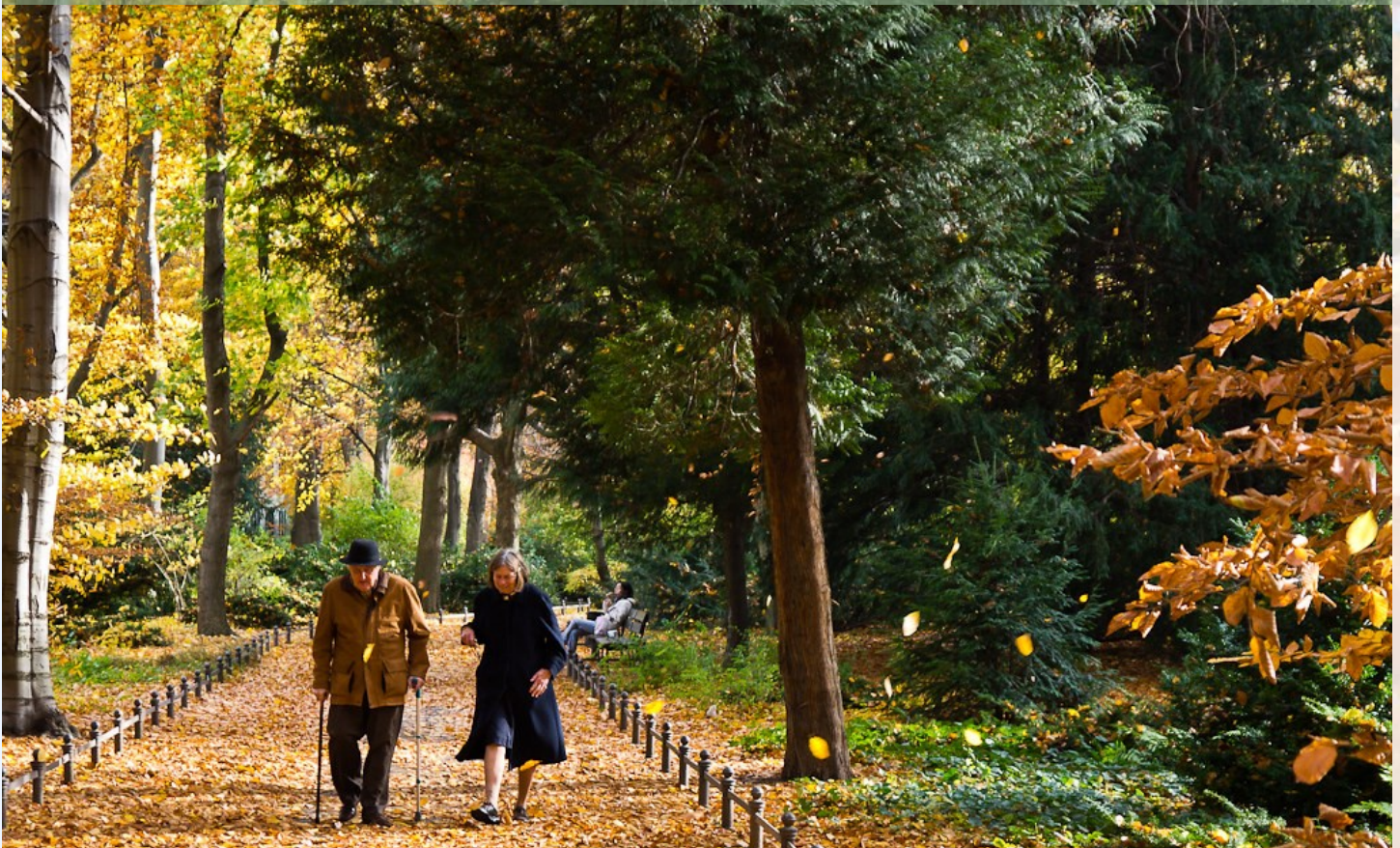


SE MN Area Agency on Aging

Fall Newsletter 2021

40th Anniversary Edition



Helping older adults and their families age successfully



2720 Superior Drive NW

Suite 102

Rochester, MN 55901

Phone: 507-288-6944

FAX: 507-288-4823

In this Issue

In the Loop with Laurie	2-4
SEMAAA's 40th Anniversary Photos	5
Partnership Highlight	6
Dementia Community Summit	7
Age Friendly MN Survey	8
Fall Prevention Awareness	9
Fire, Falls, & Fraud Symposium	10
PEARLS Program	11
Classes, Opportunities, and Resources	12-13
Event Spotlight: Mayo Clinic	14
Healthcare Choices FYI	15



Cheers to SEMAAA

We are celebrating our 40th Anniversary in October!

In honor of this milestone, we asked three former staff to recall the early days of SEMAAA – Bill Markus, Arlene “Arty” Theye, and Connie Bagley....

Bill: “As I recall, the year started out normally; busy but uneventful. But **1981**, as it unfolded, turned into a wild roller-coaster year for the Area Agency on Aging.

Up to that point, the AAA was housed within the Region 10 Development Commission, a regional planning and funding organization since 1975. The RDC provided the Aging program with local funding, accounting services, office space and other supports.

The Aging program had a staff of four and our Aging advisory committee to help make decisions on Area plans, policies, and funding of grants. As Spring approached, our Aging Program manager resigned and moved out of the area. So we were down to three staff, and it took almost six months to hire a new Program manager, who came from out of state.

No sooner had she come on board than our sponsor, the Regional Development Commission, started the process of dissolution. There was a period of public hearings, testimony, and written arguments on both sides of the issue. There was a great deal of TV, radio and press coverage of the process. Needless to say - the stress level was high and getting higher by the week.

After a couple months, the big vote came to the full Commission. Dissolved!

YIKES! What do we do now?

The Aging program HAD to continue to exist because of the federal Older Americans Act, so we went through the legal process of setting up a new non-profit corporation, which became SEMAAA, inc. We had to form a new board, find new office space and move to a new location. One major problem: we had very little cash since our local funding support was gone.

We may have been in a bind. But do you know that when trouble hits, often people rally? And help shows up — along with kindness and caring in the most unexpected ways. In our case, it did!

The first big step took place when one of our new board members, Alex Smekta (Rochester Mayor) spoke with Roger Stasek (director of the Rochester Senior Center). He then attended a senior center board meeting and was granted free space for us in the Castle on the third floor (later we paid a bargain rent).

Once we had secured a place to have our offices, many volunteers showed up to help us move our donated desks and equipment. Pickup trucks and strong backs got us to a new home; four of us in one room. Barb, Arlene, Maxine and myself — cozy as can be.



Things were heading for a steady course, but the roller coaster had one more thrill to throw at us; our new director resigned and moved to Washington. After a few months, we hired Connie and the next chapter was underway."

Arty: "It's hard to believe I spent over sixty percent of my lifetime working for SEMAAA. I certainly learned a lot over those 38 years. Now that I am a "senior," I can say that so many of the things older people face are true. Do I feel old? Not really, but the physical changes do happen: like hearing, eyesight and creaky bones. Mentally, the change I notice most is I am slower to remember names. Retirement is great, the pace is mine.




I feel fortunate that the agency afforded me the ability to help people. Grateful callers to the Senior LinkAge Line were pleased to get direction, non-biased advice, simplified facts, the correct forms, or understanding of how the "system" works. That was satisfying - as was sitting at a table with a dinner sharing nourishment and conversation.

The morning coffee talks with staff is something I miss. We shared stories, problem-solved together, vented our fears, hopes and frustrations. Seeing the region's towns and people and understanding their unique subcultures was so interesting. Each place seemed to have a personality - each person a story.

It is fortunate to have a stable Older Americans Act. Even though various Presidents and Congresses or Governors created ups and downs in funding or changes in rules, the forecasts made in the aging network were accurate. Population changes, minority diversity, employment challenges, technology breakthroughs and even preparing for natural disasters and pandemics were always on the agenda and still are. The nation, states, and its regions are not the same (likely never will be). Each cohort of citizens is different; their needs vary. Accepting this and allowing flexibility is important; Minnesota and SEMAAA are very aware of this.

There are unforeseen changes and challenges facing all of us. The Area Agency on Aging may be small and still unknown to many, but it has resiliency and a strong backbone, willing and open to whatever is to be. I am both thankful and proud to have served the agency and wish all the staff, board, and entire network a bright future."





CONNIE: “Memories of the **2007** flood that affected many seniors and their families in Fillmore, Houston, and Winona counties - and all the time spent helping them recover - is something that I will always remember. People’s basements were literally full of mud. Furnaces and water heaters were a total loss, as they were completely plugged up with mud. Walls were destroyed and needed repair; a lot of bleach was used to combat the mold that began to grow. The homes that they had lived in for years were completely decimated, and they needed to start over.

FEMA was involved, and we were busy helping seniors complete applications so they could receive the help they needed. HUD brought in trailers as a temporary housing solution. SEMAAA staff helped with referrals to SEMCAC for meals, and a dining site was set up. We also helped with expanded transportation services and other needed support. It took almost two years for people to get back to a permanent living situation after the flood. We were glad that we could be a part of this wonderful example of “people helping people!”

Another memory that comes to mind is the day we moved from our office space in downtown Rochester to SEMAAA’s current office on Superior Drive NW. I liked the downtown location (in the Premier bank building), but there were changes happening around us; we needed more space, and there was no room for expansion at the bank location. Not to mention the parking was challenging.

We worked with local commercial realtor, Bucky Beeman, and he showed us *so many* office spaces. (Keep in mind that we did not have a big budget, and we were quickly running out of options.) Bucky said he had one last option; when we saw the large parking lot, we immediately said, “We will take it!” It was just the right amount of space, and we were able to negotiate for additional space for a conference room.

Then, the real adventure began, as the moving company did not realize ***just how much stuff*** we had! They did not even bring any moving carts! We had *so many* office chairs - they took up an entire truckload! If Kim and Dan had not rolled up their sleeves and helped, we would still be unloading! I don’t think we left the office until 10:30 pm that night. The space needed some renovation; the SLL space, that I fondly refer to as the “Bull-Pen,” needed quite a bit of work.

When we first moved in seven years ago, there were just two other buildings around us - now there are around 22 buildings with more restaurants. Lucky we moved when we did! I always said that I needed to retire before we went through another move.

We became a nonprofit organization in 1981, after the regional development commission dissolved. An executive director was hired, and she left after just six months. Then the board offered me the opportunity to become the new director. At that time, we were the only free-standing AAA in the state. We had the freedom to experiment and to see what worked best. I was very pleased with the development of our board of directors, as it truly was a representation of the wide range of backgrounds within our senior population. Although we faced some challenges, we powered through and kept the focus on senior resources. When I started, we had four staff. When I retired, we employed over twenty-two staff! It was wonderful to be part of such a strong team and community. I truly love Southeastern Minnesota, especially Rochester – a great place to live, work and retire in!”

SEMAAAA's 40th Anniversary



PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT



Three Rivers Community Action works with multiple community partners to provide transportation, food, housing, energy assistance, advocacy and education to individuals and families. Meeting these needs is at the heart of their mission and ultimately helps older adults age in place more successfully.

They currently serve older adults in Goodhue, Rice and Wabasha counties who are 60+. One of their programs is focused on providing support to caregivers in the form of information, resources, and referrals to community partners. There are two advocates that assist in this mission: Carla Pearson, LSW – Older Adult Services Coordinator and Nicole Pelzl, BS – Older Adult Services Specialist.

Carla Pearson is a Licensed Social Worker and is a strong advocate for older adults and their caregivers in Rice and Western Goodhue Counties. She maintains an active caseload of older adults and is especially passionate about depression awareness and treatment, assisting caregivers with navigating the dementia journey, and problem-solving issues so older adults can safely remain in their home for as long as possible. Carla earned her Bachelors of Science in Social Work at Augsburg College where she met her husband. They now reside in Northfield with their three dogs and have three daughters in college.

In 2015, Nicole graduated with a bachelor's degree in Human Services from Metropolitan State University. One year after graduating from college, she moved away from the cities to settle in Cannon Falls. Shortly after, she applied at Three Rivers as an administrative assistant and is now an advocate. She will be celebrating 5 years in October with the agency. The most rewarding aspect of being an advocate is visiting her clients, listening to their stories, and helping them find the services they need to stay in their home. In her free time, Nicole enjoys being outdoors, traveling, and playing with her two-year-old American Bulldog. She shares a favorite quote:

"If you can wake up every morning loving what you do, & help & inspire others around you to be better than they were yesterday, then you know you're doing something right in business and in life"

SEMAAA is grateful for their work assisting older adults with options for services to remain independent and at home. If you or a loved one would like to reach Three Rivers Older Adult Services, please contact Carla at 507-330-7152 or Nicole at 507-421-6067.



Pictured: Nicole Pelzl



Come together in this virtual summit to share experiences, learnings and best practices

Don't miss the opportunity to:

- **Hear from communities** who are doing great work and learn from their successes and challenges.
- **Discover about new initiatives** that promise to help us take the next leap forward.
- **Join water-cooler conversations** to engage in conversation on topics of your choosing.
- **Experience the latest theatrical video** from The Remember Project and connect with others on themes raised in the play.
- **Join a community of learning** to engage year-round.

People leading dementia-friendly community efforts, Dementia Friends and Champions, healthcare providers, civic leaders, senior center staff, volunteers, people with dementia-related illnesses, caregivers . . . anyone interested in making their communities more dementia friendly. This is for you!

Thursday, October 7

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Interactive with small and large group discussions and optional selections with ample time for breaks and networking activities.

Zoom

Cost: free!

Register now!

trellisconnects.org/2021-summit

Questions?

Contact Jen Rooney

jrooney@trellisconnects.org



A Program of TRELLIS™



A Program of TRELLIS™



A Program of TRELLIS™



The 2021 Community Summit is hosted by Trellis as part of its dementia-friendly community initiatives

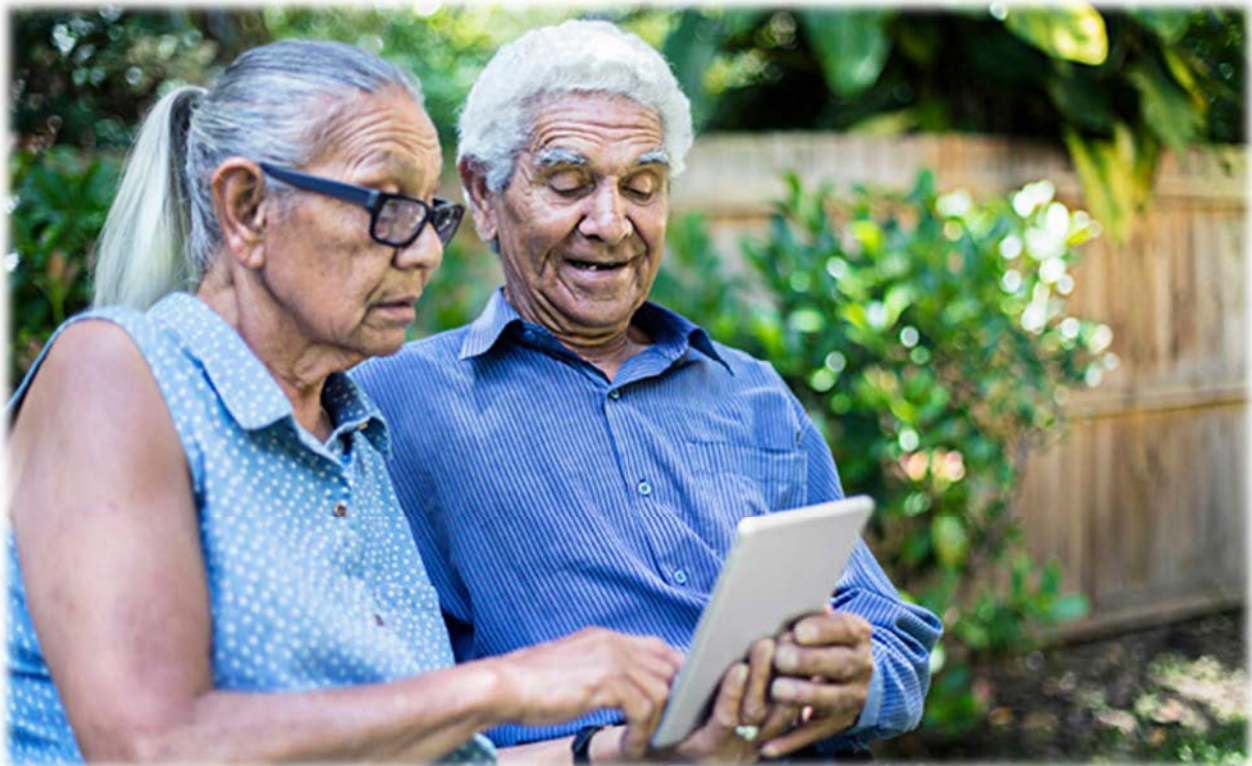
**The state of MN is working on
becoming an Age Friendly state!**

One of the first steps in these efforts is to conduct a statewide survey to assess Minnesota's needs. As we grow older, each local community plays a significant role in our ability to age comfortably in place. Please take some time to complete this survey and share your thoughts about what we all need to live well and age well.



The results of the survey will be used to set priorities and develop strategies for both the State Plan on Aging and the Age-Friendly MN Council. Results will also be used by other State agency partners as well as by regions, sovereign nations, and community organizations.

To participate, please go to mn.gov/dhs/age-friendly-mn/
and click on “Take the Community Survey”





Fall Prevention Awareness Week has arrived once again! Every September on the first day of fall, the Falls Free® Initiative promotes National Falls Prevention Awareness Week.



Pictured, Connie Bogard and Chersten Keillor

States, organizations, and other entities working to support older adults are encouraged to host and promote falls prevention education and screening activities to raise awareness about the impact of falls among older adults and offer practical fall prevention solutions.

The Olmsted County Falls Coalition works on this all year, and they make a special push to address solutions and raise awareness during Fall Prevention Awareness week. With COVID in mind, they are not planning on leading multiple in-person presentations this year but instead will focus on a series of virtual roundtable discussions with Wellness/Activity directors of independent and assisted living communities. The goal is to find out more about what they are already doing to prevent falls, learn from each other, and offer additional resources and support to enhance programming and education in those settings.

In addition to the roundtable discussion, the coalition has presented at Towne Club Apartments to 25 people in early August and may present to a group of seniors at Autumn Ridge Church in October. From their work last year, the coalition still has copies of the "Build Better Balance" books. This year, they are matching older adults to student coaches or working in small groups to move through the material covered in the book. This is possible through a partnership with Family Service Rochester, Winona State University, and Mayo Clinic DP Students. If interested in taking part in this, call FSR at 507-287-2010.

There are still some evidence-based fall prevention classes available to sign up for this fall if you are interested:

Austin YMCA- Virtual—September 21st-December 9th, 9:30-10:30, www.yourjuniper.org

Ace Brain Fitness-Virtual—September 14th-December 7th, 10:30-11:30
www.yourjuniper.org

Stewartville- United Methodist Church-In-Person-900 John Wesley Ave NW, September 14, Tue & Thurs. 10-11:30, Call FSR to register- 507-287-2010

Also check out the flyer on page 10 of this newsletter to learn more about a Senior Safety Symposium. This is a statewide virtual event open to anyone looking to learn more about protecting yourself from falls, fire, and fraud.

SENIOR SAFETY SYMPOSIUM

Fire | Falls | Fraud

Monday, September 20th, 2021

9:00 am — 11:00 am

A statewide virtual event sponsored by Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging in partnership with Whitney Senior Center, AARP, and Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division

Fire

Kathi Osmonson and Bob Reif
Deputy State Fire Marshals
MN State Fire Marshal Division

(Pre-recorded presentation with Live Q & A)



Falls

Paula Woischke
Director
Whitney Senior Center



FOR:
Older Adults, Caregivers,
Professionals, and those
interested in learning about
staying safe in their home and
community.

Fraud

Jay Haapala
Associate Director—Community Engagement
AARP Minnesota



Contact:

natalie.matthewson@cmcoa.org
to register





PEARLS

Program to Encourage Active Rewarding Lives

PEARLS Coaches are available to work with you one-on-one to help you address symptoms of depression while creating a plan to become more engaged with family, friends, and the activities you enjoy. Sessions can be held over the phone, on a computer, or in person.



Contact one of these agencies to get connected and learn more about this evidence-based program.

Elder Network– 507-285-5272

Family Service Rochester– 507-287-2010

WellConnect– www.wellconnectsemn.org

Winona Friendship Center– 507-454-5212

Upcoming VIRTUAL Classes and Opportunities for Assistance in Region 10

MEDICARE 101*: Learn about Medicare Parts A, B, C and D and additional insurance options. We'll help you understand the enrollment process and options that affect personal costs. Class dates:

September 28th: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm (with Jerry Roberts)

October 4th: 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm (with Chad Wojchik)

October 21st: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm (with Chad Wojchik)

January 13th: 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm (with Jerry Roberts)

NEW TO MEDICARE / ABCD's - Do you want to better understand your Medicare options and benefits? Let a certified Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist from the SE MN Area Agency on Aging help you make informed decisions. This class outlines the parts of Medicare, enrollment periods and penalties, special programs, and tools and tips for comparing current health and drug options available in Minnesota. Annual open enrollment begins in October and ends in early December.

Registration through Rochester Community Education.

October 5th: 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm - facilitated by Jerry Roberts.

HOW SLL CAN HELP YOU! / MEDICARE UPDATES - *Event is specifically for residents of Three Links Care Center in Northfield, no outside registration available.* General SLL information with reminders of Medicare OEP and updates.

October 7th: 1:30 pm - 3 pm - facilitated by Chad Wojchik.

PAYING AND PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM CARE* - Long-term care is the personal care and household help you need as you grow older or have a chronic illness or disability. Medicare and your health insurance do not pay for most long-term care. This presentation will provide you with information on why and how to plan and pay for your future long-term care needs.

December 13th: 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm - facilitated by Chad Wojchik.

*Register for SEMAAA hosted events at

www.EventBrite.com/o/semaaa-34313681085

If you are unable to make it to a virtual event and prefer a 1:1 phone conversation; Senior LinkAge Line® is available Monday – Friday from 8 am – 4:30 pm @ 1-800-333-2433.



In-person options for assistance may be available with our partner agencies.
Please reach out to our advocate network directly to schedule.

Dodge / Steele	Melissa Almer	SEMCAC	507-450-8848
Fillmore / Houston	Shauma Meyer	SEMCAC	507-864-8225
Freeborn	Ashley Shaft	Senior Resources	507-377-7433
Rice* (also serves Cannon Falls and Kenyon in Goodhue County)	Carla Pearson	Three Rivers Community Action	800-277-8418 (ext. 328)
Goodhue / Wabasha	Nicole Pelzl	Three Rivers Community Action	507-421-6067
Mower	Nancy Donahue	Mower County Seniors	507-433-8376 507-433-3462
Olmsted	Kate Jirik	Elder Network	507-285-5272
Winona	Lori Paulson Marite Olmstead	Winona Friendship Center	507-454-7369



Mayo Clinic School of Continuous
Professional Development



2021 Mayo Clinic
Conference on

BRAIN HEALTH & DEMENTIA

A BRIGHTER PATH FORWARD

LIVESTREAM CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

In collaboration with:



[CE.MAYO.EDU/BRAINHEALTH2021](https://ce.mayo.edu/brainhealth2021)

[#BrainHealth21](https://twitter.com/BrainHealth21)

Spotlight
EVENT

Join **Mayo Clinic**, **AARP**, and the **Alzheimer's Association** for the Mayo Clinic Conference on Brain Health and Dementia on [Friday, October 29th, virtually via livestream](#). This FREE event is for people living with dementia, care partners and families, healthcare professionals, and anyone interested in supporting friends and neighbors who may be experiencing memory loss, Alzheimer's, or another dementia.

A Brighter Path Forward will focus on lessons learned that have deepened our understanding of the dementia experience, challenged our perspectives, and inspired us like never before toward greater empathy, inclusivity, and innovative reforms to create a better world for those impacted by dementia.



2022 Health Care Choices will not be printed

- ⇒ The MN Board on Aging has had a decrease in federal funding that helped cover Health Care Choices printing costs.
- ⇒ Postage costs have risen, and it is very expensive to mail such a large item to thousands of people each year.
- ⇒ It is much more cost effective for people to view the book **online** and download pages they consider most useful.
- ⇒ Did you know? Often, people only use a few pages of the 200+ page book to choose their Medicare plan!
- ⇒ In addition, some plans make updates to benefits, etc. throughout the year.
- ⇒ Once the books are printed, this information immediately becomes out-of-date once there has been an update.
- ⇒ The online version is always the most up-to-date edition! Check it out!
- ⇒ People can also refer to their print copies of "Medicare and You," which is mailed out to enrollees each September.



Please call the **Senior LinkAge Line** at **800-333-2433** for assistance. Staff and volunteers can always print out and mail pages that would be the most helpful for you and your loved ones.

WISHING YOU & YOURS A HAPPY & HEALTHY AUTUMN!



2021 SEMAAA BOARD

Jenelle Cummings — Chair, Mower
Jean Eaton — Vice Chair, Freeborn
Brad Lohrbach — Treasurer, Dodge
Mike Hancock — Secretary, at Large
Marti Riley — Olmsted
Lloyd Swalve — Fillmore
Dave Vandergon — Goodhue
Karen Hanson — Winona
Jim Hanesworth — Houston
Marie Hlava — at Large
Dr. Dwight Jennings — at Large
Margaret Cook — at Large
Rita Fox — Wabasha
Valerie Knutson — Steele

Get on board!

SEMAAA is currently accepting applications for a new board member for Rice County.

Please contact Laurie Brownell for an application:

laurie@semaaa.org

2021 SEMAAA STAFF

- **Laurie Brownell** – Executive Director
- **Anna Thomson**– Administrative Assistant
- **Kim Voth** – Grant Manager/Financial Officer
- **Laurie Marreel** – Grants Administrator
- **Patti Schad** – Finance Assistant
- **Jacob Flint**– Data/Administrative Assistant
- **Annie Avery** – Senior LinkAge Line® Coordinator
- **Jerry Roberts** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Starla Inman** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Chad Wojchik** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Jone Trapp** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Tambi Lokken** – Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist
- **Laurie Magnus** – Senior Linkage Line® Specialist / Volunteer Coordinator
- **Dan Conway** – Lead Eldercare Development Program
- **Chersten Keillor** – Eldercare Development Program
- **Lori Wacek** – Community Living Coordinator
- **Emily Krowiorz** – Community Living Specialist
- **Chris Johnson** – Community Living Specialist
- **Sara Kohrs** – Community Living Specialist
- **Jay Hall** – Community Living Specialist
- **Camille Bruns** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Pam Speltz** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Katie Shimek** – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- **Nicole Cummings** – Preadmission Screening Specialist