



Southeastern Minnesota AREA AGENCY on AGING

Winter Newsletter 2021



Helping older adults and their families age successfully

SEMAAA

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LOOP

IN THE

With Laurie

When I think of SEMAAA's staff, the word grateful comes to mind. I recently did the activity where you choose a word and think of the first thing that comes to your mind for each letter in 5 seconds or less...

- G – great customer service
- R – ready to listen
- A – always informed and ready to help
- T – team players, each & every one of them
- E – easy to talk to
- F – full of knowledge & helpful support
- U – unending commitment to assist others
- L – loads of great ideas and laughter

Truly Grateful for SEMAAA staff and the many talents they bring to the team!

On behalf of the SEMAAA staff and board, I want to extend a sincere message of appreciation to Brad Lohrbach, SEMAAA board member for six years and has served as Secretary for 1 year and Treasurer for 3 years. Brad completes his second term with the SEMAAA Board of Directors at the end of December.

Brad did a wonderful job of breaking down complicated Treasurer's Reports into a more understandable version of what we should be focusing on. We are grateful to Brad for guiding the leadership transition during SEMAAA's Executive Director search process.

Brad would sit back and observe - when he spoke, he provided keen insights and was eager to share his wide array of wisdom. He was always ready to give his honest feedback. Thanks for everything! You will be missed.

Finding Ways to Engage
at Every Age,

Laurie

SEMAAA Executive Director



Brad on his Harley-Davidson riding off to new adventures.

Snapshot: 2021





On November 4th, Pine Island School District hosted a 4-hour Dementia Friends Workshop, organized by Marie Hlava, Angela Koster-Sorenson and Carolyn O'Reilly. Their passion, dedication and leadership brought it all together for a unique day of learning and hands-on creating for these students. The students and advisors came from Pine Island, LaCrescent-Hokah, and Zumbrota-Mazeppa districts as part of an FCCLA event and increased Minnesota's Dementia Friends by 30!



The workshop included videos showing how music helps people living with dementia, featured the Beatriz Lab (a virtual reality experience), and had five unique project stations all designed to give students ideas that they could duplicate in their communities to help families living with dementia. The project stations included fidget mats, healthy food collages, gratitude jars, care partner journals and creative storytelling.

Part of the day included a 1-hour Dementia Friends Information Session. Participants think of an action they can take to become more dementia friendly in their own communities. Below are some of the student responses to the statement, "As a Dementia Friend, I will..."

"Create a safe place for people with dementia."

"Communicate respectfully, be calm, play music if they are having a hard time."

"Work to show people that people with dementia still feel."

"I will understand that people with dementia are still people."

"Offer to help my neighbor."

"Be respectful and understanding, open to new things and experiences, have an open mind and heart."

Pine Island advisors, Angela Koster-Sorenson and Carolyn O'Reilly, commented about students' responses to the event:

"It was such a great day! Middle school students came up to me at a few points today (Friday, the day after the workshop) expressing the desire to continue the service projects in their community. It was amazing to watch them learn and grow in this training. Then to have them the next morning already wanting to take on projects and serve is evidence of a successful day for sure!!!"

"The students came into the day thinking of dementia as loss and sadness, but by the end of the Workshop they understood that people living with dementia can feel joy and other emotions. I believe they understood the key message that there is more to the person than the dementia."

Some of these students were interested in becoming Dementia Champions in the future and were inspired to do more in their communities. It was a great day for everyone involved and the organizers are already planning to offer another workshop this winter! We are so thankful to have leaders like this in our region and can already see the positive ripple effect of connecting youth to these learning opportunities and building awareness.



St. Cloud students at a recent statewide event showcasing dementia friends content

Dementia Friendly Supports Continue to Grow in SE MN



Supporting caregivers and individuals with dementia has long been a priority for SEMAAA but lately we've had even more communities and partners stepping up to fill gaps and offer creative and supportive programming! With TA and support from SEMAAA, communities and partners have educated themselves about dementia, attended Dementia Champion trainings and Information Sessions and learned how dementia affects the individual and caregiver. These champions turned that knowledge into action and organized community events, brought in educational speakers, hosted book clubs, held movie showings, led Dementia Friends Information Sessions, organized an event for youth, led dementia choirs, facilitated memory cafes and more. Even during a pandemic many caring individuals have found a way to keep moving forward and support individuals with dementia and their care partners. We are so thankful to have them in our region!

Memory Cafes are a great way for people coping with memory loss to meet new people and socialize, laugh, and learn with others, in an understanding and friendly atmosphere. Below is a list of Memory Cafés in SE MN. Please call the contact number for more information. For verification of a Cafe due to changing Covid situations, contact Marie Hlava at 507-259-0613 or mmhlava@gmail.com.

Freeborn County

Albert Lea - Meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Freeborn County Historical Museum at 2:00. Coordinators are Jan - 507-213-6783 or Corrine - 507-402-7138

Goodhue County

Pine Island - Meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Pine Island Senior Center from 2:30-4:30. Coordinator- Marie - 507-259-0613

Olmsted County

Rochester - *Coming Soon!* Coordinator - Melissa - 507-285-5272.

Rice County

Faribault - Memory café for early onset Alzheimer's and dementia. Held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. Coordinator- Kira. Call for more details about date and time 507-331-2276.

Steele County

Owatonna - First session starting December 14th at the Steele County History Center at 10:00. Contact MaryAnne at: maryannehiggins@steelehistorymuseum.org.

Wabasha County

Wabasha - First session starting December 9th at the Chocolate Escape from 1-2:30pm. Coordinator- Bonnie - 651-564-0351.

Winona County

Winona - Meets every Wednesday (except the 1st Wed. of the month) at Beno's Deli from 2:30-3:30. Coordinator Lori - 507-454-7369.



Albert Lea community partners come together to promote their new memory Café



RESOUNDING VOICES CHORUS

Pictured: Members of Resounding Voices - A community chorus in Rochester, MN - performed their Fall Concert on Sunday, November 14th, 2021. Resounding Voices Chorus welcomes those experiencing Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia and their support partners.

Top Right Photo: SEMAAA's Chersten Keillor was there tapping her toes at the resource table!

Age-Friendly Minnesota Community Focus Groups

The state of MN is working to become more Age-Friendly, and part of that process is to gather input about what older Minnesotans want and need in their communities to be independent, healthy, engaged, and safe as they age. The push to become Age-Friendly is being led by the Minnesota Board on Aging, the Department of Human Services, and the aging network around the state (including the Area Agencies on Aging). Multiple focus groups have been held across the state including Albert Lea, Pine Island, and Wabasha in SE MN. For these three sessions, we had participants from the surrounding areas of Owatonna, Mazeppa, Oronoco, Lake City, and Plainview. The state of Minnesota is focusing on these eight domains:

1. Built Environment: Housing, Outdoor Spaces, and Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Community Support and Health Services
4. Communication and Information
5. Social Participation and Inclusion
6. Work, Volunteering and Civic Engagement
7. Safety, Basic Needs, and Affording Aging
8. Emergency Preparedness and Community Satisfaction



Each focus group voted on 2 topics to discuss and answered questions related to those domains. There was broad agreement from participants that they wish to remain in their current home. If they are unable to remain in their current home, they still want to remain in their current community where they have lifelong community connections. Some of the common themes we heard in our focus groups were about communication and the lack of awareness about available resources and knowing where to look when you need something, as well as the challenges of affording everything you may need as you age. Everything from unexpected health issues, access to health care especially in more rural communities, transportation, chore services, affordable housing and affording basic services came up as challenges for older adults today. It was also noted in our discussions that there is a lack of inclusion or interaction between minority populations and others, and they'd like to see more opportunities for supporting and connecting with each other.

Feedback from the focus groups will help Minnesota set its priorities and develop plans to make communities across the state better places for older people to live and age now and into the future.

Become A SEMAAA Volunteer!

Are you looking to give back to your community?

Do you want to help older adults?

You can help with...

- In-person forms assistance
- Office tasks
- Helping identify and prevent fraud
- Health insurance counseling
- Presentations in your community

You will receive...

- Training
- Creative ways to use your talents
- Sense of purpose
- Physical, social, & mental activity



Serving the counties of Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona .



SENIOR LINKAGE LINE

**To volunteer or for more information contact
the Senior LinkAge Line at:**

800.333.2433

**Wishing you and your loved ones peace, health,
happiness, and prosperity in the coming New Year!**



**Southeastern Minnesota
AREA AGENCY on AGING**

2021 SEMAAA BOARD

Jenelle Cummings — Chair, Mower
Jean Eaton — Vice Chair, Freeborn
Brad Lohrbach — Treasurer, Dodge
Mike Hancock — Secretary, at Large
Marti Riley — Olmsted
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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 new board
members for

Rice and Dodge Counties!

Please contact Laurie Brownell for
an application:

laurie@semaaa.org

2021 SEMAAA STAFF

- **Laurie Brownell** – Executive Director
- **Anna Thomson**– Administrative Assistant
- **Kim Voth** – Financial Director & Grants Manager
- **Laurie Marreel** – Grants Administrator
- **Patti Schad** – Finance Assistant
- **Penny Schmit** - Grants Administrator
- **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
- **Dan Conway** – Lead Eldercare Developer
- **Chersten Keillor** – Eldercare Developer
- **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