



## 2022 Winter Newsletter

*Helping older adults & their families age successfully*

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December 2022







*Happy Holidays from*

# Southeastern Minnesota AREA AGENCY on AGING

*Find each  
word in the  
puzzle.*

*Words can  
go in any  
direction.*

*Words can  
share letters  
as they  
cross over  
each other.*

*Answers on  
page 8.*

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

CAREGIVER

HEALTH

ORNAMENT

CHRISTMAS

HOLIDAY

RESOURCES

COMMUNITY

KINDNESS

SANTA

DEMENTIA

KWANZAA

SENIOR

FRIENDS

LIGHTS

SNOW

GIVE

MEDICARE

SUPPORT

HANUKKAH

MENORAH

VOLUNTEER

# LOOP

IN THE

With Laurie

I have always shared my mantra that believing in Santa at any age is a good thing. We are never too old to write a letter to Santa and share what we are

hopeful for and dream of. I was recently at a community event and stopped by the Letters to Santa Station. I took a moment to watch children and adults write their letters and place them in the mailbox that would get their letters directly to Santa at the North Pole. Nothing can replace the gleam in one's eye when they are pouring out their heart to Santa, whether they are asking for a new doll or a more peaceful Nation. This year, I decided to write Santa a note with a list of things I would like to see more of - and included the things I'd like to see less of. It went something like this:

Dear Santa,

*I have been behaving myself for the most part this year and look forward to the continued good health of my family & friends. When I look around my little corner of the world, I would love to see less conflict and more Collaboration, less bullying and more genuine support offered to those who need it, fewer mountains of paperwork to apply for services, and more streamlined approaches to keep older adults living in their own homes and communities.*

*Dancing in the kitchen is still my place, and when I think of some of my favorite songs, I think of the goodwill and cheer that you spread each year. Lyrics like, "Clap Along If You Know What Happiness Means to You," "Don't Stop Believing," and "Walking on Sunshine." Gene Autry's version of "Up on the Housetop," and Burl Ives' "Frosty the Snowman" surely put everyone in a good mood! I will leave some cookies on the kitchen table - feel free to take a bite out of the ones you like and remember to dance like nobody is watching.*

**Laurie Brownell**, SEMAAA Executive Director



# The Inflation Reduction Act Lowers Health Care Costs for Millions of Americans

Medicare's new ability to negotiate drug prices will mean that people with Medicare will have more access to innovative life-saving treatments, and the costs will be lower for both. The Inflation Reduction Act was recently approved, and this law promises to lower prescription drug costs, make health insurance more affordable, and make the economy work for working families. Millions of Americans will save money with important benefits like:

- **Lower prescription drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries through price negotiation with manufacturers.**
- **\$35 per month insulin on the plan's formulary in 2023.**
- **A yearly cap (\$2,000 in 2025) on out-of-pocket prescription drug costs.**
- **\$0 once catastrophic coverage is reached.**
- **Continued lower health insurance premiums through the state's marketplace. Limiting the increase in premiums for 2024-2030.**
- **Eliminating cost sharing for adult vaccines covered under Part D.**
- **Requiring drug makers to pay the government rebates if Part B or Part D drug prices increase faster than the rate of inflation.**

Before the Inflation Reduction Act, more than 5 million people with Medicare struggled to afford their prescription drugs. People with lower incomes and those under age 65 are more likely to skip the medicine they need because of the high costs. One of the main reasons prescription drugs are higher in the US than other countries is because we lack market competition. Medicare will force drug makers to create new ways to do business to stay competitive. Changes will apply to both Medicare Part D stand-alone plans and Medicare Advantage Plans with drug coverage.



SENIOR LINKAGE LINE

Call the **Senior LinkAge Line® 800-333-2433** for assistance understanding Medicare or other benefits.



## Inflation Reduction Act Timeline

2023

- Drug companies pay rebates if drug prices increase faster than inflation
- \$35/month for Part D Insulin
- \$0 cost for adult vaccines under Part D (including the shingles vaccine)

2024

- \$0 coinsurance when you reach catastrophic coverage
- Full Extra Help is expanded to 150% FPL

2025

- \$2,000 out-of-pocket cap in Part D and other drug benefit charges

2026

Medicare will negotiate prices for high-cost drugs

- 10 Part D drugs

2027

- 15 Part D drugs

2028

- 15 Part B & D drugs

2029

- 20 Part B & D drugs

2024-2030:

Part D  
premium  
growth is  
limited to no  
more than 6%  
per year

- Administration's drug rebate rule is delayed to 2032



## ***Caregiving During the Holidays***

If you consistently provide care to a family member or friend, then you are a **caregiver**. Whether you live with the person you care for, live in the same community, or provide support from a distance, you are considered a caregiver. Many people do not self-identify as one though and think the term “caregiver” refers only to health professionals. Based on a 2020 report from AARP, one in five of us are informal caregivers often taking on tasks outside of our comfort zone with little preparation or training. Sometimes it’s a gradual shift of doing a few extra tasks for a family member who can no longer manage those things due to aging or a temporary illness. Other times, it is unexpected and sudden, and you find yourself helping with all the activities of daily living and managing the household on your own. No matter what your unique situation is, it can take a physical and emotional toll, and identifying as a caregiver is

one of the first steps to being open and able to ask for the help you need.

Being a caregiver during the holidays can often add an extra layer of stress with potential travel, disruption of regular routines, or hosting responsibilities. Here are some strategies to consider that can make the holidays feel more manageable and an opportunity for you to take a break rather than feel even more stress trying to meet the demands of the season.

**Simplify your schedule** - Remember you don’t have to do all the things you used to do. Think about what is realistic and less disruptive and commit to doing only those things while opting out of stressful traditions.

**Communicate your needs** - The holidays can be a good time to communicate with family and be honest about what you need. Sometimes family members are simply not aware of the situation and what you need but would be happy to help.



**Accept Help** - Accept help from others! This can be hard sometimes, as we like to think we can do it all, but it gives you the break you need to feel more balanced and take care of yourself.

**Connect to Resources** - There are numerous resources available in our SE region. Call the Senior LinkAge Line® or go to our website ([semaaaa.org](http://semaaaa.org)) to connect to supports. There are numerous community organizations in our region providing everything from nutritious meals, transportation, respite, chore, and homemaker services. Even checking one of these tasks off your list can really lighten your load.

**Join a support group** - Depending on where you live there are support groups available online or in-person. Talking with peers about your situation can be helpful and healing.

**Commit to taking care of your health** - Without your health, you will not be able to sustain your role as a caregiver and provide the support your loved one needs. Commit to your health by taking time to exercise, build in breaks from caregiving, accept help from

others, and use the resources in your community.

**Consider respite care** - It can be hard to imagine leaving your family member with someone you don't know but there are several organizations in our region who have trained volunteers who can come and spend time with your loved one so you can go to an appointment, run errands, or just have time to yourself. We all need breaks from our jobs and responsibilities and caregiving is no exception.

We hope you find the support you need this holiday season and consider some of these strategies to give yourself a break, accept help, and take part in what feels fun and realistic.



### Helpful links to Caregiving Resources:

**Senior LinkAge Line® 1-800-333-2433**

[www.minnesotahelp.info](http://www.minnesotahelp.info)

**SE MN Area Agency on Aging**

[semaaaa.org/information-services/caregivers/](http://semaaaa.org/information-services/caregivers/)

**National Alliance for Caregivers**

<https://www.caregiving.org/>

**Family Caregiver Alliance**

<https://www.caregiver.org/>

**Alzheimer's Association**

<https://www.alz.org/>

 **Southeastern Minnesota  
AREA AGENCY on AGING**

# New Volunteer Spotlight



**Hometown:** Rochester, MN

**Dream Vacation Destination:** Orlando, FL



**Favorite Food:**  
Sausage & Pepperoni  
Pizza



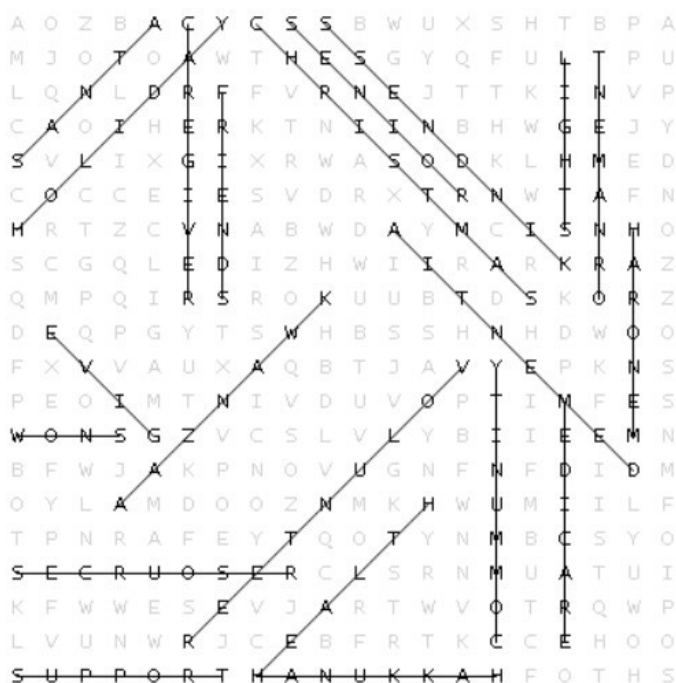
**Pets:** One cat named Carmella



Adam comes to us as a volunteer from Rochester Academy for Independent Living (RAIL), a program to help young adults with disabilities integrate into the community and work settings. The program's goal is to assist the adults at RAIL in developing the independent living and social skills needed to become active, productive, and integrated members of their community. *Join us in welcoming Adam!*



**Favorite Hobbies:**  
Driving & detailing cars



Pssst....Word Search  
Answers from page 2





# Dementia Friendly Programs & Services Continue to Fill a Need in SE MN

In SE MN, we are fortunate to have the energy and passion of Marie Hlava, SEMAAA Board Member and Dementia Friend extraordinaire! Marie continues to dedicate herself to this cause by coordinating Dementia Friendly (DF) events with high school students, facilitating the Memory Café in Pine Island, leading DF Information Sessions, speaking at events locally and statewide, and sharing her knowledge and event planning talents with other communities. Her mantra over the years has been, *"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."* - Mother Teresa.

We can clearly see the ripples of her influence in our region, and we are so thankful for her passion!

On Thursday December 1st, Marie facilitated a Dementia Friendly event at the Pine Island High School with 13 youth from FFA and FCCLA clubs as well as







Pictured, previous (page 9), top: SEMAAA Board Treasurer, Marie Hlava, scrapbooks with DF event participants.

Previous page, middle : DF participants during music and storytelling breakout sessions.

Previous page, bottom: DF event participants enjoy lunch and scrapbooking.

Pictured, this page (10), top: Gratitude information displays and snacks for DF event participants

Bottom: Greg Lenn, former teacher and speaker, at December 1st's DF Information Session.

Pictured, next page (11), Elder Network DF participants pose for a group photo.



13 care partners and persons living with dementia. The event schedule included a Dementia Friends Information Session to provide students with a basic understanding and knowledge base. Greg Lenn, a former teacher, talked about how he navigates life living with aphasia, a type of frontotemporal dementia and uses a book with pictures to help him stay on track. Everyone then rotated through four breakout sessions focused on music, storytelling, scrapbooking, and gratitude. Many of the students have family members living with dementia and participating in this event was one way they could learn more about the disease and understand how to better connect and communicate with their loved ones. Marie is planning to hold a workshop in the coming year to help other Dementia Champions, advocates, and teachers in our region learn how to plan similar events in their communities.



# Dementia Friendly Spotlight

## Elder Network

Staff continue to build and support established Memory Cafés in Rochester and Wabasha. The goal of these Memory Cafés is for people coping with memory loss to socialize, laugh, and learn with others in an understanding and friendly atmosphere. Meeting at Zadeo's Pizza 1021 15th Ave SE, Rochester, every 3rd Thursday from 2-3pm. Call Elder Network at 507-285-5272 in Rochester. Also meeting the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month from 10-11:30 am at United Church of Christ in Wabasha.

*Contact Bonnie Sandberg for more information: 651-564-0351*

## The Winona Friendship Center

The Winona Friendship Center hosts an annual Winona Dementia Friendly Week, which takes place in April. It includes interactive events, education, and guest speakers to build awareness and reduce stigma in the community.

*For more information and dates contact Lori Paulson at 507-454-7369.*

## Mower County Senior Center

Staff continue to grow and support an established memory café in Austin. The goal of the Memory Café is to create a sense of love & warmth, a safe place to be, a familiar routine,



connectivity, belonging, purpose, & simplicity for individuals experiencing mild to moderate memory impairment & their caregivers. Meets the 1st Thursday of the month from 2- 3:30pm at the Mower County Senior Center - Coffee Shop.

*Call Joan Hanson with questions: 507-433-3462.*

## Goodhue Middle School

Goodhue Middle school teacher Carolyn O'Reilly plans to partner with Marie Hlava to offer a dementia friendly learning series for 6-8th grade students. Students will become dementia friends and take part in a 4-week series to increase dementia awareness and build intergenerational connections between themselves and adults living with dementia in the community.

# SEMAAA Board

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Dave Vandergon - *Goodhue County*

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Chersten Keillor - *Eldercare Developer*  
Laurie Marreel - *Grants Administrator*  
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Anna Thomson - *Office Manager*  
Kim Voth - *Financial Director / Grants Manager*  
Annie Avery - *Senior Linkage Line® Coordinator*  
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Tambi Lokken - *Senior Linkage Line® Specialist*  
Laurie Magnus - *Senior Linkage Line® Specialist*  
Jerry Roberts - *Senior Linkage Line® Specialist*  
Jone Trapp - *Senior Linkage Line® Specialist*  
Chad Wojchik - *Senior Linkage Line® Specialist*  
Cea Grass - *Senior Linkage Line® Outreach Specialist*  
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Nicole Cummings - *Preadmission Screening Specialist*  
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