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

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

By promoting and engaging in activity, wellness, and inclusivity, more Americans than ever before can “Get into the Act.” While Areawide Aging Agency through its funded programs, provides congregate and home delivered meals, transportation to medical appointments, shopping and nutrition sites, health promotion activities, caregiver training, support, and respite, and legal representation among other services to older adults year-round, Older Americans Month offers an opportunity to emphasize how older adults can access the home- and community-based services they need to live independently in their communities.

Discover Older Americans Month: Visit http://acl.gov/olderamericansmonth
Connect: Follow Areawide on Facebook or by visiting www.areawideaging.org.
Areawide Receives Grant to Help Seniors Apply for Medicare Subsidies

Areawide Aging Agency has received a grant through the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act, commonly called MIPPA to increase awareness and to provide assistance to those seniors who may be eligible for extra help with their Medicare Premiums and Medicare Part D costs. Seniors may be eligible for help through the Low Income Subsidy (LIS) program and Medicare Savings Plan (MSP). Many people who are receiving Medicare may be struggling to pay their premiums and prescription costs and not be aware that extra help is available.

Areawide I & A staff will be making presentations at nutrition sites, health fairs, and other areas to increase awareness of the assistance that is available.

In order to receive help, an application must be completed. The application is sent to the Social Security Administration. The application process is done online. The I & A staff will also be either assisting seniors or actually making the application for them. Eligibility is determined by the Social Security Administration and applicants will be notified by mail.

If you or someone you know may be eligible for this extra help and would like more information or would need assistance in filling out an on-line application, please contact the MIPPA staff at (405)943-4344 or (405)942-8500.

Silver-Hair Legislators Following Several Bills of Interest to Seniors

Areawide, the Silver Haired Legislature, and other senior advocacy groups are closely watching the following 2015 bills of interest to seniors. Please contact your representative and senator regarding these bills.

HB 1327 by Rep. Morrissette (D). – This Bill makes substantial changes in the Nursing Home Care Act. It improves staffing ratios, strengthens family and resident councils, and improves the Nurse Aide Abuse Registry processes and multiple other reforms. This has passed the House Long-Term Care Committee and is awaiting a vote in the House of Representatives.

HB 1062 by Rep. Dustin Roberts (R). This Bill requires nursing homes to have an emergency plan that includes access to an emergency power generator on or off-site. This has passed the House Long-Term Care Committee and is awaiting a vote in the House of Representatives.

SB 578 by Senator Shaw (R). This bill directs the Department of Corrections to initiate a request for proposal for a stand-alone long-term care facility for critically or terminally ill sex offenders. This has passed the Senate Public Safety Committee and has been referred to the Senate Appropriations committee.

HB 1110 by Rep. Morrissette (D). This Bill creates the Vulnerable Adult Injury and Death Review Board to be administered within the Office of the Attorney General. The Board will review unexplained injuries and deaths of vulnerable adults and make recommendations to legislators and state agencies to improve resident care and state agency procedures and processes. This has been assigned to the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee and has not been heard.
Continental Resources Makes Donation to Areawide

Areawide Aging Agency would like to thank Continental Resources for their donation to help us purchase a new paper shredder. Our agency processes and stores, by mandate, personal and financial information that must be shredded once it becomes obsolete. With identity theft concerns at an all-time high, the need to protect personal information is more important than ever. It is more economical for Areawide Aging Agency to shred these documents in-house than to have it outsourced. It’s the little things that make a difference, and the addition of a new shredder put a smile on everyone’s face here at Areawide Aging Agency. Some of our Board members got together to try out the new shredder, from left to right, Blair Schoeb, Chalon Anderson and Joe Forrest. Thank you again, Continental Resources! If you would like more information on how to make a donation to Areawide Aging Agency, visit our web page, www.areawideaging.org.

Trinity Redeemer Health Alliance Sets Date for Senior Seminar

On April 24, 2015 the Trinity Redeemer Health Alliance will present a seminar for senior adults and their family members. The topics are “Interacting with Individuals with Dementia”, “Maintaining Your Memory”, “Sexuality and Aging”, and “The Benefits of Laughter”. These topics will be presented by professionals from the community. The seminar will be held in the auditorium of the Oklahoma City-County Regional Wellness Campus located at 2600 NE 63rd Street in Oklahoma City. (Between NE Kelley and I-35). Individuals can register on the day of the seminar beginning at 8:30 AM. The program will begin at 9:00 AM and will end at approximately 1:00 PM. A light continental breakfast and a healthy lunch will be served. There is no cost to attend the seminar and registration is not required. For additional information contact Norma Goff at normagoff06@gmail.com or at (405) 672-7345.

Blair Schoeb, Chalon Anderson and Joe Forrest, Areawide Board members take a closer look at the paper shredder donated by Continental Resources.
There Are Legacies...Then There Are Your Legacies

by Rick Goralewiez, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma

In a strict legal sense, the word “legacy” relates to cash or personal property which a person inherits from a deceased person, either through testament (will or trust) or intestate (no will or trust) succession. Many people, when preparing a will, do this in very generic terms (“all property to be divided in equal shares between my children”). Sometimes people fail to realize that “legacy” means so much more than what the dictionary tells us, and that its value cannot be measured in money alone.

The legacy of a person or family also includes that which, at least in their minds, set them apart from others. It makes them special or unique. This includes memories. I’m aware of very few families who take the time to record or document their elders’ stories or memories. Relatively few individuals make this effort on their own. As a result, important bits of family history become lost as older family members pass away. These records can be made electronically or in writing, and they can be done with or without participation of other family members. Many choose to place these records in the hands of a relative or the executor named in a will. In addition, it has become somewhat trendy to create “ethical wills.” These legally non-binding documents allow you to pass along values, hopes, examples or traditions you wish your family to preserve and retain. They can be as simple as a letter stored with your will, or more elaborate. Some stores carry journal books to be used for this purpose. Obviously, this is a sentimental endeavor. It also can have practical effect. Stories or explanations such as these, often not appropriate in a formal will or trust, can provide insight into why you settled upon the estate plan you chose. In the event of a contest, having the back-story behind why you left or did not leave your property in the manner one might expect, will help validate estate plans a judge or attorney might otherwise consider bizarre.

In addition to summing up your life and family traditions, do not forget that people often attach great sentimental value to objects and mementos. “Grandma used this tea set every time we’d have tea parties at her house when I was little.” “These old rods and tackle boxes mean a lot to me ‘cause of all the fishing trips I went on with Dad.” “Mom taught me to read from this Bible before I even started school.” Those old fishing supplies may fetch $10 or $15 at an estate garage sale. But to your fishing-buddy heir they may be priceless. Try to anticipate these sorts of attachments as you develop your estate plan. Consider talking to your family about why you want to leave this property to a specific recipient, and get an idea of what items mean most to the individuals in your life. Also, think about making gifts of heirloom property during your lifetime to prevent disputes later on.

Everyone can tailor their estate plan to their individual circumstances. To do so, bear in mind the 4 “C’s”: Careful Consideration, Communication, and Clarity.
Annual Caregiver Survival Skills Conference Will Be Held in June

The 17th Annual Caregiver Survival Skills Conference: The Power to Persevere, will be held Friday, June 12th, from 8:30 am until 2:30 pm, at the Conference Center at Mercy in Oklahoma City. Caregivers face tough situations and have to make very difficult decisions, and sometimes question whether they would be able to carry on. The conference will give the Caregiver the resources to help them make it through each day. The Caregivers will be able to take a break from caregiving and learn how to handle every day caregiving, both mentally and emotionally.

According to the AARP, Oklahoma has over 600,000 caregivers. A primary caregiver takes responsibility for a patient’s day to day care and comfort. In most cases, this involves helping the patient with basic physical and medical care, and communicating with the patient’s health care providers. Many caregivers do this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without a break.

The conference will begin with Laree Reidenbaugh who will speak on The Power of Perspective. Ms. Reidenbaugh is a HR Programs Field Coordinator with the State of Oklahoma’s Department of Human Services. She coordinates the Volunteer Chaplaincy services. Next, Jill Watskey, J.D., will speak on The Power of the Law. Ms. Watskey has practiced elder law, focusing on estate and long-term care planning for over 10 years. After lunch, Sunbeam Family Services counselors David Swope, M.Ed., LPC, LADC, and Teresa Deck, MS LPC, will talk on The Power of the Mind. Ms. Deck is the Director of Counseling at Sunbeam Family Services. She has extensive experience with group facilitation for depression, divorce, grief and women’s trauma. David Swope focuses on the therapeutic and healing benefits of healthy and supportive relationship building. His expertise lies with mental health issues, depression, anxiety and grief.

The keynote speaker will be Bruce McIntyre. He will speak on the Power to Persevere. Mr. McIntyre is currently the Associate Director of the Parkinson Foundation of Oklahoma. He is the author of Resilient Life and Graceful Transitions. Bruce speaks to thousands of people each year and loves to inspire, encourage and help people. “It’s my mission in life”, commented Bruce on his website. “I am so grateful for the people who have inspired, encouraged and helped me along the way. What I have received, I want to pass along to you.”

In addition to the speakers, the conference will provide lunch as well as a resource fair with representatives from over 25 local organizations & services in the community. There is a suggested donation of $10.00 to attend the conference. For more information or to register, please call (405) 752-3803. This conference is sponsored by Mercy Hospital, Home Instead Senior Care, Concordia Life Care Community, Sunbeam Family Services and Areawide Aging Agency.

Problem Solving Skills Help to Advocate for a Loved One

There are times when family members, who have a loved one in a nursing facility or an assisted living center, are uncertain about how to advocate on behalf of the resident. Advocacy is basically problem-solving. Learning the basics of the problem-solving process and steps to take along the way will benefit both the resident and family member.

Stage 1 is defining the problem. What exactly is the issue? Be able to describe the problem with as much detail as possible. Include the five “W’s” – who, what, where, when, why in your description. What information do you have from direct observation, discussion with a loved one or a staff member? Keep written notes which are dated to document your personal observations and discussions so you can refer to them as needed. Use objective, factual language to address the concern.

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Aging Services of Canadian County (ASCC) staff and senior participants joined together for a bake sale that was held at the Mustang nutrition site. It is such a blessing and humbling to see everyone band together to raise funds for the program. ASCC appreciates the people that baked and donated items as well as the people that purchased the goodies to make the bake sale so successful!

As the end of another grant year comes close, Missy King, Project Director, would like to take this opportunity to thank her ASCC staff. They go above and beyond on a daily basis for our seniors, and don’t get near the recognition that they should! “I feel truly honored to work with these amazing people,” commented Missy King.

As always, seniors needing services in Canadian County can call (405) 262-7121 and ASCC will be glad to do whatever they can to help get them the services they need.

The Caregiver Fundamentals Program of Sunbeam Family Services (CFP) has added a new support group for family caregivers on the northeast side of Oklahoma City. With funding from the Older Americans Act and support from Areawide Aging Agency, CFP provides lunch and a safe environment for caregivers to meet and share their experiences as a caregiver to a family member. Come and build relationships, share information and resources, vent frustrations and gain emotional support. There is no cost for the support group; however, donations are accepted.

Fourth Tuesday of each month
Easter Seals, 701 NE 13th, OKC, Use West Door
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
Lunch provided—please RSVP to Jessica Welp (with Sunbeam), (405) 528-7724 ext. 165 or Vicki Wood (with Easter Seals), (405) 239-2525

EMBARK Senior Transportation through a grant from Areawide Aging Agency works to provide safe, reliable, and courteous transportation to hundreds of seniors in Oklahoma County and Northern Cleveland County.

Embark provides rides to people ages 60 and over to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and congregate meal centers. A small donation is suggested, but not required.

When you need information regarding transportation services for seniors, call Jackie at (405) 297-2583. Your call is important. If there is no answer, please leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Many fun and exciting things are happening at Logan County Aging Services (LCAS). So come out to the sites and join in the fun! The Logan County Council on Aging is hosting a fabulous volunteer appreciation luncheon on April 11, 2015. Let your site manager know that you will be attending. This is always a great fun-filled afternoon!

Highland Park in Guthrie is bustling with activity. The tennis and basketball courts are open and many people are out walking the lovely trails and sitting out by the pond. Be careful, those ducks and geese on the pond are always hungry. The swimming pool opens Memorial Day weekend, and this year they will be offering adult swim times when the kiddos are not in the pool. So take advantage if you enjoy the water!

Enjoy the springtime and LCAS looks forward to seeing everyone at the sites.
Aging Services Inc. has recently been the recipient of a prestigious award for the programs and services they operate. The award was received from the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Program (NANASP). Bob Blancato, Executive Director of NANASP, traveled from Washington D.C. to present the award to ASI Executive Director Kathleen Wilson at the Brand Senior Center in Moore. NANASP is a national membership organization for persons across the country working to provide older adults healthful and nutritious food through community based services. The award was the top year-end grant made by NANASP. Aging Services Inc. operates five congregate meal sites in Cleveland County and also operates a county wide home-delivered meal program. Aging Services Inc. has been serving Cleveland County for the past forty years.

Mobile Meals of Oklahoma County would like to invite you to the Music 4 Meals benefiting the Mobile Meals program. The show will feature the Southern Nazarene University Chorale Singers on April 19th, 2015 at Trinity Church of the Nazarene, 7301 S. Walker Avenue, Oklahoma City. At 3:00 p.m. a reception and silent auction will be held followed by the 4:00 p.m. SNU Chorale concert. Mobile Meals looks forward to seeing you at the program.

Remember your home bound senior with a visit, card or phone call on Easter, April 5, Mother’s Day, May 10th and Father’s Day, June 21st. They will greatly appreciate it!

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In Stage 2 determine what your goal is. What does the resident want to happen? What is an acceptable resolution? What outcome will benefit the resident? Make sure the goal is realistic and benefits the resident. Identify what action steps you could take to try to solve the problem at this point. Determine if there is a designated person on staff to handle concerns such as the administrator, the director of nurses or the social services director. Think through the “pros” and “cons” in analyzing your approach to address a concern. Once you have taken action and addressed the issue, follow-up with the staff person you spoke to by sending a note summarizing the discussion and include any specific steps the facility said it would take to resolve the issue. Lastly, evaluate the outcome of your efforts. What was the result of your action? Is the problem resolved, partially resolved or not yet resolved? If the problem is only partially resolved or not resolved at all, repeat the above steps to re-address a second time.

If you are still not successful, identify where you could turn for assistance by contacting the local ombudsman or the state survey agency. If your own attempts are not successful and you would like assistance with advocacy you may contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at Areawide Aging Agency (405)942-8500; search our website at www.areawideaging.org or visit us on Facebook.
I would like to honor my elderly family member or other Older Oklahoman by making a fully tax deductible contribution to Areawide Aging Agency.

This gift is In Memory of ________________________________

This gift is In Honor of ________________________________

Please send an acknowledgement to:

NAME: ______________________________________________

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