



Connecting Caregivers

We see you; we care about you and we're here to help!

We recently added a feature to our newsletter called "Connecting Caregivers" to provide information and support to you, as one of the 53 million caregivers across the country. Specifically, as your local area agency on aging, Aging

Ahead stands with you as your provider of services funded through the National Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) AND as a knowledgeable source of information and link to community resources.

Our Spring '24 edition listed FCSP services: In-Home Respite, Adult Day Care, Minor Home Modification, Durable Medical Equipment, Nutritional Supplements, Incontinence Products and a professional staff ready to listen and offer support.

Since spring we have added two new exciting programs!

1) **Adult Day Services Respite Reimbursement Program** – This pilot program offers an opportunity for a handful of participants to attend a state licensed adult day center of their choice. Aging Ahead is able to offer reimbursement for a limited number of days per week.

2) **Peer-to-Peer Connection** – At the urging of a caregiver who is anxious to meet with others who are living a similar situation, a virtual meeting place has been developed. Our goal is to have several small groups of caregivers meeting over Zoom bi-weekly/monthly to chat, share and support.

Services received under the Family Caregiver Support Program, and administered by Aging Ahead are authorized through our Community Options and Services Department. To learn more about these and our other support for family caregivers, reach out to our COS staff. The number for each county can be found below.

Beyond the direct services offered by Aging Ahead, our staff can discuss opportunities found in the community that may help you in your role as a family caregiver. For example, do you know...

- all of the benefits available through your loved one's health insurance plan? Some coverage can provide transportation to medical appointments, help with home modification costs, over-the-counter medications, adaptive equipment, nutritional supplements, etc. A quick call to member services may open up a world of assistance not previously known.
- you can watch over 250 instructional videos to help improve caregiver and older adult safety in your home? This is an amazing resource with specifics taught by Adaptive Equipment and Caregiving Corner's physical, speech, and occupational therapists.
- that St. Louis Health Equipment lending Program (STL HELP) and Aging Ahead have partnered to open a HELP HUB in South County? Through this effort, refurbished medical equipment is distributed at no cost to community members.
- under the National Family Caregiver Support Program, some services are available to Caregivers of various eligibilities? -Caregivers of Older Adults 60+, OR any age with Alzheimer's or related dementia, Older Relative Caregiver 55+ as the primary Caregiver for an adult with a disability, Older Relative Caregiver 55+ as the primary Caregiver for a family member under 18,

We know that everyone's caregiving experience is different. If you have particular topics of interest, please reach out. We're here to help!

Caregivers who are interested in more information are encouraged to speak with a Community Options Specialist at the numbers below:

St. Louis County: 636-207-0847
St. Charles County: 636-579-0555
Jefferson County: 636-253-0558
Franklin County: 636-629-3143
Or by calling 1-800-243-6060





COOKING FOR ONE

Cooking can be tough when you're only making meals for yourself. Don't let family-sized recipes, large amounts of leftovers, or time-consuming food prep deter you from a nutritious meal for one. Consider our tips below to make cooking for one more tasty, affordable, and inspiring!

Cooking for one starts with a plan

Allow time to plan out your meals before heading to the grocery store. Start by planning 1-3 homemade meals a week and consider making extra helpings for leftovers that you can eat the next day or freeze for later.



Make a list of your favorite recipes
Having a list of quick and simple recipes on hand can make it easy to make a nutritious meal in a pinch! Do you like leftovers? If not, stick to recipes that make one or two servings. What are some of your favorite recipes? Ours are yogurt parfaits with fresh berries and sheet pan meals.

Shop at the meat, seafood, and deli counter

Did you know you can buy custom quantities of foods like chicken breast, deli meats, and prepared salads at your grocery counters? Two salmon filets? Coming right up!

Reinvent leftovers

If you're not a fan of eating the same thing over and over again, try reinventing leftovers into sandwiches, soups, quesadillas, and more! Leftover chili? Try adding it to a baked potato with your favorite toppings for a chili-loaded baked potato.

Cook with frozen fruits & vegetables

Frozen fruits and vegetables save time, reduce waste, and pack the same nutritional value as fresh produce! Boil, steam or bake veggies and toss fruits into smoothies or oatmeal!



Make it fun

Cooking should be an enjoyable, fun, and possibly creative experience! Cooking for one means you can eat what you want, whenever you want! You don't have to please anyone but yourself! Cook using the ingredients you enjoy, have breakfast for dinner, or try listening to music while making your meals

Your Vote Matters 2024!

THANK YOU, Aging Ahead clients, for taking our Barriers to Voting Survey. Your responses provided valuable information about how Aging Ahead can help you exercise your right to vote. We are happy to report that many of you selected "I have no barriers to vote." If that ever changes, please know that you can call Aging Ahead, and we are happy to assist you.

The most common barrier, selected by 43% of respondents, was "It's a challenge for me to walk or stand at my polling place." This was corroborated by the number of clients who spoke with us at the in-person Voter Information and Registration Events about this issue.

GOOD NEWS! There is a possible solution for many of you with this challenge and voting offices encourage voters to take advantage of it! Missouri law mandates that registered voters with a permanent disability must be allowed to join the Permanently Disabled Voting List so they can vote at home. Please note: a 'permanent disability' can simply be you cannot stand in line, you no longer drive and cannot make it to a polling location, it's hard for you to walk, etc. This is very different than the requirements for Social Security Disability! Once you are added to this list, you will receive an Absentee Ballot **Application** by mail prior to each election. You may fill out that Absentee Ballot Application and subsequent Absentee Ballot and mail them in – none of these documents require notarization.

To find request an application to vote absentee on a permanent basis and be placed on the Permanently Disabled List in your county, please call your local election office or use the link below:

St. Louis County—(314) 615-1800/StLouisco.com

St. Charles County—Sccmo.org

Jefferson County—(636) 797-5486/Jeffcomo.org

Franklin County—(636) 583-6355/Franklinmo.gov





Senior Center Administrator Spotlight

Visit any of our community locations and you're likely to meet someone or learn something new. We encourage you to stop by for a visit! Find a location near you by visiting www.agingahead.org. We are all aging together—the connections made can be life-changing! Get to know Shane and Christina:

Shane Johnston, St. Clair SCA

What's the best part of your job? Being able to help the people of my community and working for a non-profit. I would have never expected to find such peace in working in an industry that's focus is on the help they can provide rather than the amount of monetary gain that can be achieved. The more chances I get to make a difference in my community for the better, the better I feel about being here (Both in life and at Aging Ahead).

What is an achievement you are proud of? I am most



proud of getting the Support Committee started. It was not easy and not easily sustained but it has been an energetic boost to the center and has created many unexpected avenues for fun that would not have happened if it wasn't for forcing these people to organize.

How do you like to spend your spare time? In my spare time I enjoy my family! I have 5 kids, so my days are never spent alone and in most cases are jammed packed with things that are not on my personal agenda but very fulfilling when completed and the family is happy. Personally, I love to garden and cook. It has taken me 4 years to make a garden that is picture worthy and producing an abundant crop, it is a lot of work that pays off when I catch my kids spending time out there eating and finding all the different types of bugs that come along with it.

Christina Bramer, Ferguson SCA

What's the best part of your job? The best part of my job is making meaningful connections with the seniors I work with. I love to hear about the senior's child-

hood stories and family history, I find it so fascinating and something we must as a collective take the time to hear from our elders about the past. Also, they make me laugh every single day.

What keeps you motivated? I've had clients tell me that after my interactions with them they feel less lonely, heard and understood, this is what keeps me motivated in my work is making a difference in clients' lives no matter how big or small. Also, what keeps me motivated is embracing challenges in life and always finding the lessons in the good and bad times.

How do you like to spend your spare time? In my spare time I love to be in nature, going for walks in the park, or simply sunbathing on a blanket and a good book. I have a passion for plants, currently I am growing 2 sequoia trees from seedlings, and I love to garden in my neighborhood.

What's the most valuable career advice you've been given? The most valuable career advice I've received is to take one step at a time. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr says, "You don't have to see the whole staircase to take the first step"



CHOICE—What is it, What's New

Created in 2014 as a solution to the ongoing challenge of attracting older adults to senior centers, CHOICE brings a variety of programs and services to locations where older adults naturally congregate like libraries.

CHOICE has a variety of programs including:
Grant's View Library— weekly presentations/lunch
University City Public Library— monthly lunch/learn
Jefferson College Arnold— twice weekly activities/ lunch.

Visit www.agingahead.org/what-we-do/choice/ to learn more or register for a program. If you have any questions, contact Emily at eharrow@agingahead.org or call 636-207-0847.



AGING AHEAD



www.agingahead.org
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Show Me Summit 2024

As Aging Ahead continues to strive to better serve adults 60 years and older in St Louis, St Charles, Jefferson and Franklin counties, we are grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow together with other aging network providers in Missouri. Several staff members and volunteers recently attended the Show Me Summit on Aging & Health in Springfield and explored innovative approaches to aging services. The Summit was a vibrant hub for learning, collaboration, and inspiration. The theme of the conference, The Age of Opportunity, was indeed a call to action where we can shape a future where aging is not a barrier, but a springboard to a fulfilling and vibrant life.

The 400+ attendees learned from inspiring speakers, innovative workshops, and opportunities to network with like-minded individuals. Together, we'll rewrite the narrative on aging and show the world what the "Age of Opportunity" truly means in Missouri! Aging Ahead was proud to be involved as a leader in presentations and helping shape a meaningful conference for all, including:

- Dynamic programming: Deep dive into cutting-edge models that empower older adults to thrive.
- Expert speakers: Insights from national and regional thought leaders in aging services.
- Innovative solutions: Explore the latest advancements in health, wellness, and technology for older adults.
- Champion inclusion and accessibility: Discover strategies to ensure all Missourians have access to the resources and support they need to age well, regardless of background or circumstance.
- Networking opportunities: Connect with colleagues from across Missouri and share best practices.
- Advocate for a more age-friendly Missouri: where older adults feel valued, respected, and engaged.

Newsletter Ad Space

Place your ad HERE! Your ad helps Aging Ahead print and share our quarterly newsletter with thousands of homebound seniors and caregivers. Do you want to see your ad here and support older adults in the community, reserve your ad space today! Contact Jan Keith at jkeith@agingahead.org.



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Easy-to-Understand Videos | Helpful Caregiver Tips | Links to Senior Service Resources

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Volunteer Opportunities

Aging Ahead Arnold Volunteer Assistant will provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere, direct participants, assist with activities, setup for lunch, distribute meals and help Aging Ahead staff where needed at the Jefferson College Arnold. If you enjoy meeting new people, socializing and making people feel welcomed, this is the volunteer role for you. Volunteers are needed Mondays and Wednesday from around 12 to 2:30.

Other opportunities needed now are Meals on Wheels volunteers in St. Clair, South County, and St. Charles. Contact Lydia Franklin at lfranklin@agingahead.org or (636) 207-0847.

