

AGING AHEAD

Supporting the journey.

FALL 2025



Aging Ahead

Aging Ahead is one of 10 Area Agencies on Aging in Missouri, we provide supportive services to adults 60 and older and their caregivers in St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson, and Franklin county. Our programs and services help older adults stay in their homes longer, avoid unnecessary institutionalizations, and promote healthy living through meals and activities.

Community Options Consulting

Our Community Options and Services Specialists can help you navigate the overwhelming amount of resources and services available to older adults and their caregivers. Information and resources on Meals on Wheels, Transportation, Family Caregiver Support, In-Home Services, Medicare & Medicaid, Benefits Assistance, and so much more. Contact one of our specialists today at (636) 207-0847.



Meals on Wheels

Are you or a loved one in need of nutrition support? Aging Ahead has been delivering nutritious meals, friendly safety checks and access to resources that enable homebound older adults to live nourished lives with independence and dignity in St Louis, St Charles, Jefferson, and Franklin counties. Contact your local senior center or (636) 207-0847 to get more information or request Meals on Wheels.

Programs and Activities

Aging Ahead has a variety of options to help older adults socialize and stay active in the community through presentations, programs, activities, and other opportunities. Many include the option of enjoying a delicious lunch. Around 18 Senior Centers and CHOICE locations in 4 counties provides something near everyone. Visit agingahead.org/what-we-do/programs-activities-and-locations/ to find a location and program near you.



Public Education and Outreach

Aging Ahead staff and volunteers present and host informational tables at community events, sharing resources and information about aging and caregiving. Requests can be made on our website at agingahead.org/what-we-do/public-education-and-outreach/



Sustainable Diet Tips

What is a “Sustainable Diet”?

A sustainable diet promotes various aspects of health and wellness with an emphasis on lowering negative environmental impact to positivity impact future generations. These diets are affordable, safe, accessible, and take cultural competence into consideration.

- Shop Locally/Seasonally

Go to your local farmers market and buy in-season produce. This requires less fuel resources to ship and reduces the need for food packaging materials.

- Choose Plant-Bases

Aim to include more plant-based foods into your diet, especially protein sources such as beans, nuts, seeds, soy, and tofu; this helps lower environmental impact.

- Grow Your Own Produce

Homegrown produce can be an enjoyable and delicious hobby and reduces the carbon footprint from buying store-brought produce. Bonus: no food packaging waste involved!

- Reduce Food Waste

Reducing waste can be simple: buy loose produce to select the exact amount you need, purchase reusable grocery bags, freeze, pickle, can, or dehydrate leftover fruits and veggies.

- Eat More Variety

If possible, eat a variety of plants and animals. A majority of the world's food supply comes from 12 plants and 5 animal species (WWF). Greater diversity among our diets will aid in the reducing the threat to food security.

For more resources on sustainability visit:
<https://www.epa.gov/sustainability>



Essence Healthcare Supports Aging Ahead!

Aging Ahead is excited to announce a partnership with Essence Healthcare, based right here in St Louis, that will support older adults in our community!

The collaboration will help provide nutritious meals and regular wellness checks for older homebound adults, helping them stay healthy, independent and connected. The partnership is also supporting our messaging on Channel 9 PBS, which gives us the opportunity to educate the public about various issues relevant to aging in the greater St Louis area.

“The partnership with Essence Healthcare supports our efforts to provide meals to older adults during a time when food costs are skyrocketing,” said Christine Hustedde, Chief Executive Officer of Aging Ahead. “Essence is also helping us make sure adults 60 years and older and their caregivers know where to turn for meals and services that help sustain their health and independence.”

“Essence Healthcare has deep roots in St. Louis, and our commitment goes beyond providing health coverage,” said Jordan Reigel, president of Essence Healthcare. “We’re proud to partner with Aging Ahead to help older adults access the resources they need to stay healthy, connected and independent.”

This partnership builds on Essence Healthcare's broader commitment to the St. Louis community. The company recently announced a partnership with [St. Louis Oasis](#), a nonprofit education and wellness organization that offers lifelong learning and health programs for older adults. In May 2025, [Essence donated \\$100,000](#) to the United Way of Greater St. Louis and mobilized employees to support tornado disaster recovery efforts through volunteer service.

We thank Essence Healthcare for their commitment to older adults and for their support – we are grateful to be **Aging Ahead** with them! Learn more about Essence Healthcare at [EssenceHealthcare.com](https://www.EssenceHealthcare.com).





Get To Know Dee-Washington

What's the best part of your job?

The wonderful staff and clients. The mission of Aging Ahead for these clients.

What is an achievement you are proud of?

Giving everyone a chance to be creative on their own. Giving the staff more involvement in the menu, Support Committee in Activities.

What keeps you motivated?

Serving the Seniors with the mission.

How do you like to spend your spare time?

Relaxing with friends, at a movie or in my home. Spending time in a pool or watching the Missouri River.

What's the most valuable career advice you've been given?

Take time for yourself. Go someplace private for a couple minutes as needed. Keep smiling. Be open and honest.



Giving Made Easy with the GoodBox

Have you spotted our GoodBox devices at Aging Ahead program locations? With just a quick tap, your gift helps provide meals, support, and connection for older adults in our community. A big

shout-out to our top three centers for their incredible generosity and engagement: **St. Peters**, **O'Fallon**, and **Affton**. Thank you for leading the way in delivering a difference!

Aging Ahead Boards

Aging Ahead is beyond grateful to our community of supporters! Staff, volunteers, community partners, and donors all help ensure we are able to support individuals through the journey of aging. At this time, we would like to send a special shout-out to those serving on our various boards. We appreciate their time, resources, guidance, insight, and dedication. We are so thankful to be Aging Ahead with all of these amazing volunteers!

Board of Directors

Sherrill Wayland – *President*
Dr. Amy Kausler – *1st Vice President*
Gary Cronin – *2nd Vice President*
Dr. Thomas Eyssell – *Treasurer*
Jesse C. Swanigan – *Secretary*
Maria Acosta-Garcia
Dr. Timothy M. Dilg
Barbara Mercadante
Paul Springer

Kristin Walters
Patricia Bowers
William Zastrow
Diana Hayes
Allen Serfas
Flora Fazio
Paula S. Walton
Christine Woody
Dr. Vaidehi (Vi) Rajagopalan

Foundation Board

Allen Serfas – *President*
Michael Graham – *Executive Vice President*
Rich Metz – *Vice President of Communications*
Diana Tucker – *Vice President of Marketing*
Jason Brown
Dennis Cooper
Derek Grier
Tarek Paterkin

Advisory Council

Jo Wentz, *Chair*
David Carr, *Vice Chair*
Rebecca Rabbitt, *Secretary*
Theresa Horrell
Patrick Fontane
Mary Wesche
Darrell Hilkerbaumer
Rob Howe
John Mikolay
Cheryl Wilson
Liz Selk
Alma Young
Sarah Levinson

Silver Haired Legislature

Dr. Thomas Eyssell – *Chair*
Barb Mercadante – *Vice Chair*
Mary Wesche – *Secretary*
Patricia Bowers
Alma Young
Lary Mohl
Brenda McDonnell
Aaron Robinson
Lisa Ezeamii
Robert (Bob) Peiper
Pat Marshall
Randall Minnis





Connecting Caregivers

We see you; we care about you and we're here to help! Natural and manmade disasters are things that we rarely think about, and we often expect that if they are going to happen, they will involve someone else, someplace else. The fact is that a disaster or emergency can directly affect our daily lives at any time. As one of the 1,000,000 family caregivers in Missouri, you may also be considering the safety, well-being and possibly the complex medical needs of your loved ones. Being prepared can make the difference between successful and unsuccessful navigation of any event.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA.gov) and the Rosalyn Carter Institute for Caregivers (RCI) (rosalynncarter.org) have worked together to create a comprehensive "Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers". * The following information is taken from the complete document which can be found at the link below.

• Step 1 IDENTIFY BARRIERS AND RISKS

- * What are the necessary assistive technology/equipment needs?
- * Do you have money to cover expenses for relocation?
- * How is personal care managed?
- * Are unique communication needs present?
- * Will others know how to care for and respond to signs of pain or confusion?
- * Do you fully understand how to manage your loved one's needs?

• Step 2 LEARN AND CONNECT

- * Engaging with your support network and knowing who you can count on if help is needed is vital. Also knowing where you can go to replace equipment, supplies or medication that may have been lost or left behind in a disaster may help you feel better prepared.
- * Lending closets and community agencies may be able to provide needed durable medical equipment. Know the providers before you need them.

- * Talk with medication prescribers NOW to understand current meds and consequences of missed doses.
- * Under certain circumstances, those separated from their prescription medications may have access to a limited supply of medications through their regular pharmacy.

• Step 3 MAKE A PLAN

- * Create a Communications Plan. Ready.gov/plan-form
- * Build a kit. Ready.gov/kit
- * Plan an evacuation route and practice your route with your care recipient. Identify a meet up spot. If it's helpful, use pictures rather than words.
- * Download the FEMA App for a list of open shelters during an active disaster.

**https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/ready-gov_caregivers-preparedness-guide.pdf*

Aging Ahead will continue to be a trusted resource for information before, during and after a disaster or emergency in our service area. Our Community Options Specialists/Case Managers and Community Services Coordinators are here to help! Please contact us at the numbers below:

St. Louis County: 636-207-0847

Jefferson County 636-253-0558

St. Charles County: 636-579-0555

Franklin County 636-629-3143

Or by calling 1-800-243-6060

Source: Family Caregiver Alliance



Celebrating Our Golden Giving Circle

Our **Golden Giving Circle** is made up of generous monthly donors whose steady support keeps meals delivered, caregivers supported, and connections growing strong. We're so grateful to our **Golden Givers** for helping older adults age with dignity and care, month after month.

Meet our Golden Giving Circle!

Allen Serfas
Barbara Robinson
Bill Shelton
Donna Lancaster
Gloria Franke
Gloria Sterling-McGill
Kristin Gledhill

Linda Whyte
Maria Rivera
Martha Tennyson
Mary Bauer
Maureen Logan
Rick Mullins



Exciting Leadership Updates

Aging Ahead is proud to announce two changes to our leadership team. MJ Grothe (pictured above on the right) has been promoted from her previous role as Manager of Senior Centers to Chief Operations Officer. Liana Gregory (pictured above on the left) joins Aging Ahead as our new Manager of Senior Centers. We hope you will join us in congratulating and welcoming both to their new positions. MJ and Liana bring great experience and passion to Aging Ahead. Below are some brief comments from both.

Welcome, Liana!

Hello, my name is Liana Gregory, and I'm excited to introduce myself as the Manager of Senior Centers. I previously served as a Supervisory Program Specialist with the Department of Veterans Affairs, where I led teams to improve operations and provide quality support to veterans. I also worked as a Regulatory Auditor with the Department of Health and Senior Services, ensuring compliance with state regulations across Missouri.

At Aging Ahead, I bring a combination of leadership, analytical skills, and a passion for service. I am committed to creating an environment where staff and clients feel supported, valued, and empowered, and I look forward to contributing to programs that make a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

Congratulations, MJ!

I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to grow and serve at Aging Ahead. I deeply believe in our mission, in the dedication of our staff, and in the strength of our Agency. Together, we are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of older adults and the communities we support. Let's continue to work for good, together.



Medicare Annual OPEN ENROLLMENT IS HERE!

From October 15 through December 7th, you can make changes to your Medicare plan that will be effective January 1st.

This year there are some significant changes. The zero dollar premium Part D plan will now have a premium of \$9.60. In our area, there are ten prescription drug plans available from 5 companies. The premiums and deductibles increased for most plans. It is very important that you read the Annual Notice of Change document that was mailed to you in September. This document is VERY IMPORTANT because it outlines what is changing.

Medicare Advantage plans also have changes. Many plans increased their maximum out of pocket amount. Most added a deductible on prescription medications which often applies only to drugs in tiers 3-5. There are also some significant differences in the extra benefits (hearing, vision, dental, fitness, transportation, meals, pharmacy cards, flex cards). Some PPO plans are leaving the market. If you are impacted, you may be moved into Original Medicare but may not have prescription

drug coverage as of January 1st. It is extremely important that you read your Annual Notice of Change or take it to a trusted advisor for a review.

Remember to be careful of Medicare fraud. Use caution when answering your phone and/or talking to individuals trying to sell you a new Medicare plan. You have until December 7th to make changes. While this is a busy season, please talk to a trusted advisor early to get the help and counseling you need.

Watch for additional information when counselors from Missouri SHIP will be available for presentations, questions, or one-on-one counseling sessions. You can always call Missouri SHIP at 1-800-390-3330 and a counselor will return your call.

Please reach out early so all your questions can be answered in a timely manner.

Rebecca, a Counselor from MissouriSHIP, can be reached directly at 636-344-0628, or, you can call 1-800-390-3330 to arrange for a phone consultation with Rebecca or another counselor.

—Rebecca Pogorzelski, R.Ph., Pharm.D, Certified Counselor MissouriSHIP



**AGING
AHEAD**
www.agingahead.org
(636) 207-0847
info@agingahead.org
Socials: @agingahead

CHOICE Opportunity

Aging Ahead and WashU are working together to bring an exciting new Virtual Program to qualified people who receive Home-delivered meals through Aging Ahead or receive transportation to our community locations for meals. If you received a letter or flyer regarding the Aging Ahead-Connect Virtual Senior Center and are interested in learning more about our online programming, please contact our CHOICE Team at 636-207-4218. We hope to connect with you soon!

Newsletter Ad Space

Place your ad HERE! Your ad helps Aging Ahead print and share our quarterly newsletter with thousands of home-bound seniors and caregivers. Do you want to see your ad here, reserve your ad space today! Contact Jan at jkeith@agingahead.org.

Aging Ahead thanks the advertisers included in this newsletter for their financial support. Please understand that Aging Ahead is in no way recommending or promoting these entities.



**Every journey is unique.
Count on **Aging Ahead** to
support yours.**

Aging Ahead is here for you.

Meals on Wheels
Community Resources
Caregiver Support
Healthy Living Programs
Options Consulting
Socialization
Benefits Assistance
And much more

Call: (800) 243-6060

Click: www.agingahead.org

**Proud supporter
of Aging Ahead and
their commitment
to serving our
community.**



Let's Medicare Together™

Founded by doctors in St. Louis,
Essence Healthcare has served
only the Medicare community
for more than 20 years.

EssenceHealthcare.com

Y0027_25-862_C