FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK

“Wow”, can you really believe we made it through a decade of the new millennium with all of its challenges and obstacles?

Well, as Human Services Providers, we find ourselves in 2010, with a new looming dilemma which could impact our ability to administer services through the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Program. This program administered by the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA’s) since 1998, provides frail, vulnerable seniors with services that enable them to remain in their own homes and communities. Without these services they may risk the possibility of nursing home placement. The State’s decision to cut all Medicaid programs by 10 percent to assist with balancing the budget is the reason given for such drastic cuts. The AAA’s in Kansas have administered this program in a cost effective manor, which ultimately saved the state money, as it is cheaper to keep a senior in their own home, compared to the cost of a nursing facility. The aging network must get busy with our advocacy to help our legislators understand the impact these type of decisions have on the frail and vulnerable ones who have paid their dues to society with service to this country and with hard work through the years of support with their tax dollars. The AAA's will continue in our tradition of providing services to seniors at the grass roots level as best we know how, and will be steadfast in our commitment of being the single-point-of-entry to seniors, by being the link to information and services which allows them the choice to remain vital, active participants in all facets of their community.

We would like to wish everyone including our consumers, constituents, providers and all, a very happy and blessed new year!!!

DE LA OFICINA DE LA DIRECTORA

Increible, ¿puede usted creer que hemos terminado la primera década del nuevo milenio con todos sus desafíos y obstáculos?

Bien, como proveedores de servicios humanos, nos encontramos en 2010, con un nuevo dilema que podría afectar nuestra capacidad de administrar servicios a través del programa de servicios al hogar en la comunidad (HCBS). Este programa administrado por las Agencias de Servicios para Envejecientes (AAA) desde 1998, provee servicios a las personas mayores de edad que son fragiles y vulnerables permitiéndoles vivir en sus propios hogares y comunidades. Sin estos servicios los envejecientes corren el riesgo de la posibilidad de la colocación en un asilo. La decisión del estado para cortar todos los programas de Medicaid por el 10 por ciento para asistir con el equilibrio del presupuesto es la razón dada para tales cortes drásticos. Las AAA en Kansas han administrado este programa de una manera eficaz, ahorrando al estado, siendo mucho más barato mantener a los mayores de edad en su propio hogar, comparado al costo de ellos vivir en un asilo. La red de servicios para los envejecientes debe ocuparse en la defensa de las personas mas frágiles y vulnerables que han pagado sus deudas a la sociedad con servicio a este país y con el trabajo duro con los años de ayuda con sus fondos provenientes de impuestos, para ayudar a nuestros legisladores a entender el impacto que estos tipos de decisiones tienen para ellos. Es el deseo de la AAA continuar en nuestra tradición de proporcionar servicios a los mayores de edad al nivel local de la mejor manera que sabemos y ser firmes en nuestra comisión de ser el solo-punto-de-entrada a los mayores de edad, siendo el eslabón a la información y a los servicios que les permiten ser participantes vitales y activos en sus comunidades.

¡Quisiéramos desear a cada uno incluyendo nuestros consumidores, correyentarios, abastecedores y al resto de nuestra comunidad un Año Nuevo muy feliz y bendecido!
SENIOR ADVOCACY

SILVER HAIRLED LEGISLATURE
BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS FOR 2010

The following are bills and resolutions passed by the 2009 session of the Silver Haired Legislature for consideration by the State of Kansas 2010 Regular Legislative Session:

✦ Bill No. 2601- (NEW) An Act concerning the Grandparents as Caregivers Act; relating to eligibility requirements.
✦ Resolution No. 2602- (NEW) A Resolution urging the legislature to provide an affordable and accessible transportation system for senior citizens.
✦ Bill No. 2603- (Amendment) An Act concerning the establishment of a state long-term care veterans’ ombudsman position.
✦ Bill No. 2604- (Amendment) A Resolution urging the legislature to enact legislation to help combat predatory payday lending practices and to regulate or prohibit income tax refund advance lending practices that adversely affect elderly.
✦ Bill No. 2605- (Amendment) An Act relating to insurance; concerning the mandatory reinstatement of certain insurance policies in case of mental incapacity of an insured.
✦ Resolution No. 2606- (NEW) A Resolution commending the legislature for providing continued retirement benefits through a defined benefit plan under the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) and continuing to annually increase the funding of KPERS toward an actuarially recommended amount.
✦ Resolution No. 2607- (NEW) A Resolution concerning the Grandparents as Caregivers Program.

For more information, copies of the bills, or to contact your State of Kansas representative, please call the Kansas Legislative Hotline at 1-800-432-3924.

K4A 2010 PUBLIC POLICY GOALS

The Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association (K4A) represents the 11 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) in Kansas that collectively serve all 105 counties in the state.

Budget Priorities:
✦ Restoration of $1,891,094 Essential Base Funding and Nutrition Programs for the AAAs. Without funding restoration, senior nutrition programs will be seriously cut or eliminated.
✦ Restoration of $1,258,588 in funding for the Senior Care Act Program in fiscal year 2011 budget. Without in-home services, seniors’ only choices are either risk doing without services or enter nursing homes.

Legislation:
✦ To enact the geriatric mental health act; establishing a geriatric mental health education, outreach and service program.
✦ To have Kansas enact minimum qualifications and training standards for all paid home health workers serving seniors.

For more information, please contact Craig Kaberline, Executive Director, K4A at 785-267-1336 or k4aed@hotmail.com.

Contact your local representatives to voice your opinion regarding issues that are important to you.
MEDICARE MEMO

Did you receive a letter from your Medicare Advantage Plan (MA) or Prescription Drug plan (PD) stating that your coverage would end December 31, 2009? If you received this information and did not make the necessary changes required to have medical and or prescription drug coverage available January 1, 2010, we have good news for you. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has extended the Special Enrollment Period (SEP) until January 31, 2010.

If you are in a MA plan:
- Beneficiaries who make no choice during the Annual Enrollment Plan (AEP) will revert to Original Medicare. You will have a Medigap guaranteed issue right. If the non-renewing plan is a Medicare Advantage with Prescription Drug Coverage and the beneficiary does not choose a Part D plan, he or she will have no drug coverage on January 1. There is an extended Special Enrollment Period (SEP) through January to choose a plan effective February 1, 2010.

If you are in a Part D plan:
- Beneficiaries who make no choice during the AEP will have no drug coverage on January 1, 2010. There is an extended SEP (through January) to choose a plan effective February 1, 2010.

The termination letters apply mainly to this group of Medicare beneficiaries.

For Dual-eligible Beneficiaries & Other Beneficiaries with LIS (Low Income Subsidy), please contact 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or contact the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging at 913-573-8531 and ask to speak with a SHICK Counselor (Senior Health Insurance Counseling In Kansas) Counselor.

WELLNESS CENTER SCHOLARSHIPS

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging (AAA) will not offer scholarship awards for the Spring Session at the Kansas City Kansas Community College.

Scholarships for the summer session will be available on a very limited basis. The summer session will run from June 2, 2010 through July 19, 2010; participants of the summer session may begin working out on May 14th.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the AAA office at 913-573-8531.

A WORKOUT ALTERNATIVE AT VERNON SENIOR CENTER

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging (AAA) currently provides a personal trainer for seniors, 60 yrs. and older at the Vernon Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays for a one hour “work out” session beginning at 10am through February 16, 2010.
The 2009 Utility Tax Rebates will be accepted from January 4, 2010 - March 31, 2010. Questions regarding the application process may be directed to the Unified Government’s Clerks office at 913-573-5260.

To qualify, you must:

- Have a total household income of less than $25,000
- Live in Kansas City, Kansas (residents of Bonner Springs and Edwardsville are not eligible)
- Born before January 1, 1944.

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging will assist with applications by appointment only. You may call for appointments beginning January 4, 2010 at 913-573-8531.

The 2010 Census is your community's voice in government. That's why it's so important that you fill in the form and promptly mail it back. When you do the math, it's easy to see what an accurate count of residents can do for your community; better infrastructure, more services, and a brighter tomorrow for everyone. In fact, the information the census collects helps determine how more than $400 billion dollars of federal funding each year is spent on infrastructure and services such as, hospitals, job training centers, schools, senior centers, bridges, other-public works projects and emergency services, etc.
LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

The application period is January 19, 2010 to March 31, 2010.

In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1) An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for purchasing heating costs, payable either to the landlord or to the fuel vendor.

2) Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments.

3) The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed guidelines listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Living at the Address</th>
<th>2010 Maximum Allowable Monthly Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$1,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>add $406 for each additional person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information or to request an application, please call 1-800-432-0043 OR Kansas City SRS at (913) 279-7000 or Leavenworth SRS (913) 651-6200.

COLD WEATHER RULE

The Cold Weather Rule ensures you will have electric and gas services for your home during the winter. You must make pay arrangements with your utility company to use the Rule and pay your current bill in full while paying off the overdue amount.

The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) wants Kansans to have the electric and gas service needed to keep their homes warm during the winter. The KCC also recognizes the customer’s responsibility to make arrangements to pay for that service. The Cold Weather Rule was designed in 1983 to ensure that both goals are met.

Questions? 1-800-662-0027
Para usar estas lineas llame al 1-800-662-0027.
SENIOR CARE ACT AND HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

When a senior citizen calls our office to receive assistance at home, he or she will be referred to the Senior Care Act (SCA) or the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) programs. You may be asking yourself what these programs do for the elderly.

The SCA Program provides assistance with housekeeping, personal care and case management services. Case Management can assist seniors by linking them to other community resources. This program is funded with Kansas state dollars. The Area Agency on Aging contracts with home health agencies to provide the personnel to serve clients at home.

The HCBS Program serves those seniors whose medical needs may qualify them for long term care. This program offers housekeeping, personal care, wellness monitoring, emergency response, case management and adult day care services. Clients who receive HCBS services must be Medicaid approved.

As you can see both programs provide opportunities for seniors with a primary focus on maintaining independence in their own home and communities. If you are in need of assistance or know of someone who needs help, please don’t hesitate to contact us at (913) 573-8531.

THE DEMENTIA CRISIS BRIDGE PROJECT

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging (AAA) would like to introduce Amy Yeager, Dementia Crisis Coordinator, with the Alzheimer’s Association - Heart of America Chapter. Amy is working with the AAA and other community partners to assist individuals with dementia and their caregiver(s) with the behavioral and affective challenges that often accompany the disease process, i.e. anxiety, depression, agitation, etc. The Dementia Crisis Bridge Project focuses on providing interventions to reduce/prevent behavioral and mood-related symptoms, while offering support to promote quality of life for the person with dementia and their caregiver(s). To find out more about this program and to be referred for services, contact (913) 573-8531.

KANSAS FOOD SALES TAX

This program offers a refund of the sales tax paid on food. To qualify you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your Kansas qualifying income must be $31,900 or less. The refund is claimed on the Kansas individual Income Tax Return.

You must also meet one of the following requirements:

- Be 55 years of age or older, OR
- Be blind or disabled, OR
- Have a dependent child under 18 who lived with you all year whom you claim as a personal exemption.

Thank You!

Appreciation is extended to the following who have contributed toward the cost of this newsletter. Names are listed in alphabetical order.

- Leonard Becicka
- Willita Cole
- Corinne Massey
- Vera Armstrong
- Margaret Fraundorfer
- Mabel Noland

A friendly reminder; to offset the cost of this publication, donations to the newsletter are always welcome.
DID YOU KNOW...

...that Martin Luther King, Jr’s efforts were not limited to securing civil rights; he also spoke out against poverty and the Vietnam War.

...the elephant is the only animal with 4 knees.

...that 73% of Valentine Day flowers are bought by men, whereas women buy only 23% of Valentine flowers.

...the average person spends about 2 years on the phone in a lifetime.

...that Kansas became the 34th state in 1861.

...that in the Middle Ages, there was a belief that the first unmarried person of the opposite sex you met on the morning of St. Valentine’s Day would become your spouse.

...that there are 10 human body parts that are only 3 letters long (eye, hip, arm, leg, ear, toe, jaw, rib, lip, and gum).

...that Dodge City, Kansas is the windiest city in the United States.

ENTER TO WIN

Answer all questions correctly to enter a drawing for a $30 gift card for Price Chopper, compliments of: Adult Health Services.

Return entry form to:

Wy/Lv AAA, Attn: The Communicator, 1300 North 78th Street, Suite 100, Kansas City, Kansas 66112 by January 29, 2010.

1. Income level for Senior Citizens Utility Tax Rebate cannot exceed __________________.

2. Which two days of the week is the AAA providing a personal trainer at the Vernon Senior Center until February 16, 2010?

3. What is the name of the AAA funded transportation program that only travels within the WyCo limits?

NAME: ________________________________

ADDRESS: ________________________________

CITY, STATE, ZIP: ________________________________

PHONE #: ________________________________

Congratulations to JoAnn Zewalk, our November/December winner!

“WELCOME IN THE NEW YEAR” WORD SEARCH

Find and circle all the words that are hidden in the grid.

- BIRTHDAYS  - CHOCOLATE
- FOOTBALL  - HUGS
- LINCOLN  - PRESIDENTS DAY
- SNOW  - SWEETS
- BLACK HISTORY  - CUPID
- GROUNDHOG DAY  - ICE
- LOVE  - RED
- SUPERBOWL  - VALENTINES DAY
- BLIZZARD  - FLURRIES
- HEARTS  - KISSES
- NEW YEAR  - RESOLUTION
- SWEETHEART  - WASHINGTON
IS THIS NEWSLETTER REACHING YOU?

Please notify us of any change in address. If the address label is incorrect, please call THE COMMUNICATOR office at 913-573-8531 or write us at the address listed above. Also, please notify us if you receive more than one copy.

THANK YOU

JANUARY OBSERVANCES

New Year’s Day - 1st
(AAA offices closed)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - 18th
(AAA offices closed)

National Glaucoma Awareness Month

FEBRUARY OBSERVANCES

Groundhog Day - 1st

Unified Government Furlough Day - 12th
(AAA offices closed)

Valentine’s Day - 14th

Presidents Day - 15th
(AAA offices closed)

Black History Month

The Communicator is published bi-monthly by Information and Assistance for Older Americans, a unit of the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging, Security Bank Building, 1300 North 78th Street, Suite 100, Kansas City, Kansas 66112. It is funded by the Kansas Department on Aging through the Older Americans’ Act. We assume no responsibility for the care and return of unsolicited material. Donations are suggested.

For more information call the Information & Assistance Department at 913-573-8531.

Information & Assistance does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, or handicap. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging by calling 913-573-8531, or for the hearing impaired TDD 1-800-766-3777.