As another year comes to an end, and I search for some heartfelt words or thoughts to pass on to you, I thought about one of my favorite poems written by Robert H. Smith. One reason this poem was so poignant to me at this time, was due to the recent passing of Elizabeth Edwards. Like so many others I was struck by the grace and dignity she showed as she faced insurmountable obstacles in her life. In her passing, she reminded me to re-focus and place more emphasis on those things in life that are most important to me. For many of us who take for granted this life and those things most important to us, family, friends and faith, Elizabeth lived knowing her days were numbered and prioritized her last days on these areas of importance. My hope for all of us is that as we take the time to reflect on this past year, going forward we will make sure we spend time enjoying those things that bring us the greatest pleasure and peace in our own personal lives.

The staff of the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. Providing quality services to our senior constituents has always been our motto, so we will continue toiling in that tradition for the coming year and our hope for each of you is that while you continue ticking through 2011, it will become the best year of your life!
Appreciation is extended to the following who have contributed toward the cost of this newsletter.

Names are listed in alphabetical order.

- Robert Anver
- Leo Killion
- David Kovac
- Patricia Smith
- Georgia Story

Support the Meals on Wheels Program

The Senior Citizen Meals on Wheels Contribution Program was created in 2002 by the Kansas Legislature to allow taxpayers to make voluntary donations to support home-delivered meals. In 2009, of the 3.4 million meals served, 1.8 million were home-delivered and 1.6 million were served at congregate meals sites. Of those receiving home-delivered meals, 72% were age 75 or older, 68% were women and more than 50% lived alone.

Any individual receiving a state income tax refund can indicate in the designated space on the tax form an amount of their refund they would like to contribute to the Meals on Wheels program. Contributions can range from $1 to all of their refund.

The federally funded Nutrition Program for the Elderly, which provides meals to older adults in senior centers, nutrition sites and in their own home began more than 30 years ago.

If you would like more information about the Meals on Wheels Program, or would like to make a donation, please contact the Area Agency on Aging at 913-573-8531.

SACRED HEART HOME HEALTH CARE

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Proverbs 3:5


Sacred Heart has earned the Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval.

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Fax: 913-334-1196
Toll Free: 1-888-465-6965
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Kansas City, Kansas 66112

www.sacredhearthomehealthcare.com

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- Community Room
- Elevator for Your Convenience and Safety

AFFORDABLE SENIOR LIVING
Age requirement - 55 years young

For Leasing Information Call: 913-371-2525
Elections for the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Silver Haired Legislature (SHL) are scheduled for March 14, 2011. Polling places will be announced in the March-April issue of The Communicator. Seven Wyandotte legislators and one from Leavenworth County will be elected (or re-elected) to serve 2 year terms.

Any older adult at least 60 years of age and a registered voter may qualify by submitting a petition with 50 signatures of registered voters who are at least 60 years old, or by paying a filing fee of $25.

Filing fees must be received by the end of business day on February 14, 2011.

Checks must be made payable to the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature and sent to the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging located in the Security Bank Building, 1300 North 78th Street, Suite 100, Kansas City, Kansas 66112.

A list of candidates and polling places will be published in the March-April issue of The Communicator and will be sent to local papers as well. Additional Information may be obtained by contacting Emma Fonseca at 913-573-8531.

Health Department Has Flu Vaccines Available

The Wyandotte County/KCK Health Department still has plenty of flu vaccines. The cost to the general public is $25. Remember it takes 10 - 14 days to be effective.

Health Department Hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30am - 4:00pm
Thursday: 8:30am - 11:00am and 3:00pm - 6:00pm

Questions, please contact the Health Department at 913-321-4803.
Flu season generally starts in November, peaks in January, February, and March, and winds down in May.

Who should get a seasonal flu shot?
Health experts say that everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine each year starting with the 2010-2011 influenza season. However, some people are at higher risk of having serious flu-related complications such as:
- Pregnant women
- Children younger than 5
- People 50 years of age and older
- People with certain chronic medical conditions

Brain Exercise
The brain needs exercise as your body does. Scientists know that it is good to give the brain a workout. How do you do that? One of the easiest and simplest ways is through plain aerobic exercise or walking. Art Kramer, a cognitive neuroscientist at the University of Illinois found that six weeks of walking for one hour three times a week improves memory attention and decision making skills. His studies show that physical activity appears to be neuroprotective. Along with increased physical activity, changing one's diet, reducing stress and staying socially engaged, positively affects one's mental acuity. The Area Agency on Aging recognizes the value of an active lifestyle. We encourage our seniors to get involved and participate in the various opportunities available in the community to improve their overall health. We developed SeniorFit, a free health and wellness program dedicated to improving the quality of life for seniors in Wyandotte County. So, let's rock!!

TRY THIS TEASER OUT FOR EXERCISE: In this puzzle, three numbers 16, 14, and 38 need to be assigned to one of the rows of numbers to the right. To which row should each number be assigned? (Hint: This is not a mathematical problem. The numerical values are irrelevant).

Answer to puzzle on page 7 of newsletter.

A 0 6 8 9 3
B 15 27 21 10 19
C 7 1 47 11 17

WHAT THE “COLD WEATHER RULE” MEANS TO YOU

If you can’t pay your entire bill, call your utility company to make pay arrangements:
- Agree to pay 1/12th of the overdue amount of your bill, plus 1/12 of your current bill, all disconnection and connection fees, and agree to pay the remainder in equal payments over the next 11 months; or
- Negotiate a payment plan to pay the overdue amount off sooner than 12 months.
- Remember, you must also pay your full bills for new service you use while paying off the overdue amount.

Apply for federal, state, local or special funds for which you are eligible.
- If you are behind in a previous payment plan and cannot catch up, you will need to make a new payment agreement with the utility.

Can I get sick with flu-like symptoms even after my flu shot?
According to CDC, there could be several reasons for getting flu-like symptoms even after you have been vaccinated against the flu. You might be exposed to an influenza virus shortly before getting vaccinated or during the two-week period. It takes the body, two weeks, to gain protection after getting vaccinated. People may become ill from other (non-flu) viruses that circulate during the flu season, which can also cause flu-like symptoms (such as rhinovirus).

To keep from getting disconnected when it is 35 degrees or above, or to get reconnected regardless of temperature, you must make pay arrangements with your utility company.

For more information, please call the Kansas Corporation Commission at 1-800-662-0027.
The Kansas Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

LIEAP is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay for home energy costs. The application period is January 13, 2011 through March 31, 2011.

You may make applications online at: www.ks.energyiassistance.com or by calling 1-800-432-0043.

To get a jump start in gathering information, the website will begin accepting online applications on December 28, 2010. However, no benefits will be approved for payment until the actual program start date of January 13, 2011.

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

2) Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

Benefit levels vary according to the following factors:

1) Household income
2) Number of persons living at the address
3) Type of dwelling
4) Type of heating
5) Heating rates

Caregiver Movie Night

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging honored local caregivers in recognition of National Family Caregivers Month with a MOVIE NIGHT. A cozy, warm night of relaxation may do both the caregiver and recipient a wonder of good.

Each Caregiver and Care recipient received:

- A FREE Popcorn and Candy Package
- A FREE Classic Movie/DVD
- A FREE Snuggle Me Blanket

7 Tips To Lower Your Winter Bill

1. Lower your thermostat and wear socks and a sweater in doors. Lowering the thermostat by just one degree Fahrenheit can reduce energy use by 3 percent.

2. If you have a forced air furnace, inspect your filters at the beginning of the heating season and monthly as long as you’ve got the system running. Clean or replace them if there is significant dust build up.

3. Install do-it-yourself plastic film storm windows.

4. Weather strip and caulk windows. Check window frames for cracks and fill them with caulk that contains silicon. Putty-like “rope caulk” can help seal large cracks and save you up to 5 percent on your energy bill.

5. Close the fireplace damper and seal the opening shut when not in use. Never use a traditional fireplace for supplemental heating. A fireplace sucks heated air out of your home to fuel the fire; then your furnace has to turn on to replace that warm air.

6. Dispose of older incandescent lights and buy new LED holiday lights. Older strings of incandescent lights can use up to 99 percent more energy than new LED strings. Plus, the wire insulation on older lights can erode and pose a fire hazard. Turn on your holiday lights for no more than 5 hours per day (to keep energy use down).

7. Close off any unused rooms. Shut the doors to them but also close the heating vents. If the room is closed off, it will not need to be heated as much. The exception to this is if the room is where the thermostat is located.
SAFE SENIOR is a property tax refund program that is administered under the provisions of the Kansas Homestead Act (property tax refund) by the Kansas Department of Revenue. SAFE SENIOR is also referred to as “Kansas Property Tax Relief for Low Income Seniors.”

WHO QUALIFIES FOR A SAFE SENIOR REFUND?
A Kansas resident all of 2010, who owned a home in Kansas during 2010, who was age 65 or older for all of 2010 (born before January 1, 1945) and who had a household income of $17,500 or less in 2010.

HOW MUCH IS THE REFUND?
The refund is 45% of the 2010 general property tax paid or to be paid—as shown on the 2010 real estate tax statement for the residence in which the claimant lived in 2010. The 2010 property tax consists of the 1st half which is due in December 2010 and the 2nd half which is due in May 2010. The property tax is the total of both the 1st and 2nd half taxes.

THE 1ST HALF OF THE 2010 GENERAL PROPERTY TAXES MUST BE ACTUALLY PAID AND HAD BEEN PAID IN A TIMELY MANNER.

There is no limit as to the amount of the SAFE SENIOR refund, although, the appraised value of the residence can not exceed $350,000.

What is “household income” for SAFE SENIOR PURPOSES? It is federally all income taxable and nontaxable received by all household members during 2010. INCLUDING 100% OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS RECEIVED. Household income does not include: Social Security (DISABILITY) payments, SSI (DISABILITY) payments, Railroad (DISABILITY) payments or Veterans (DISABILITY) payments.

May I receive both a Homestead refund and a SAFE SENIOR refund? No, a claimant may receive either a Homestead or a SAFE SENIOR refund, but not both.

Customers who need help are encouraged to call the Kansas Taxline at 1-785-368-8222.

Kansas Homestead and Food Sales Tax

The Homestead Refund is a rebate program for the property taxes paid by homeowners and renters. The refund is based on a portion of the property tax paid on a Kansas resident's homestead. If you own your home, the refund is a percentage of your general property tax. If you rent your home, 15% of the rent paid for occupancy is used as the property tax amount. The maximum refund is $700.

- To qualify you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your total household income must be $31,300 or less.
- You must also meet one of the following requirements:
  - You were born before January 1, 1954; OR
  - You must have been totally and permanently disabled or blind during the entire year, regardless of your age; OR
  - You must have had a dependent child living with you all of last year who was born before January 1, 2009, and was under the age of 18 the entire year.

The Food Sales Tax offers a refund of the sales tax paid on food for certain qualifying individuals. To qualify, you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your Kansas qualifying income must be $31,900 or less and 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

Utility Tax Rebate

The 2010 Utility Tax Rebates will be accepted from January 3, 2011 - March 31, 2011. 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, 1945.

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging will assist with applications by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. You may call for appointments to 913-573-8531.
WELCOMING IN THE NEW YEAR!

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

BALLOONS PINK
CHAMPAGNE PRESIDENT'S DAY
CHOCOLATE RED
CUPCAKE RESOLUTIONS
DIAMONDS ROSES
DIET SKIING
EXERCISE SNOW BUNNY
GROUNDHOG DAY STREAMERS
HEARTS SUPERBOWL
LINCOLNS BIRTHDAY TEDDY BEAR
LOVE THERMOSTAT
MARTIN LUTHER KING UTILITY TAX REBATE
NEW YEARS DAY VALENTINES DAY
NOISEMAKER WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY
PARTY HATS WEATHERIZATION

Be sure to complete and return your entry for a chance to win a $25 gift card to Wal-Mart compliments of Grace Hospice.

Congratulations to Dorothy Clark, our November/December winner! Dorothy won a $25 gift card to Quik Trip, compliments of Victory Hills Senior Living.

FUN FACTS
- The tallest president was Lincoln at 6' 4"; at 5'4", Madison was the shortest.
- Ronald Reagan was the oldest person to be elected as president at 69 years of age. The youngest was Kennedy at age 43. However, Roosevelt was the youngest man to become president - he was 42 when he succeeded McKinley, who had been assassinated.
- In the United States, over 1 billion valentine cards are sent each year; 85% are women.
- Richard Cadbury invented the first Valentine's Day candy box in the late 1800's.

Puzzle Answer: The numbers are organized by shape! In Row A, all the numbers have rounded shapes; In Row C, all the numbers have linear shapes; Row B is mix of curves and lines. Therefore, 16 goes to B, 14 goes to C and 38 goes to A.

Answer all questions correctly to enter a drawing for a $25 gift card to Wal-Mart compliments of: Grace Hospice.

Return entry form to:
Wy/LV AAA, Attn: The Communicator, 1300 North 78th Street, Suite 100, KCK 66112 by February 1, 2011.

1. Who wrote the poem quoted in the article written by the director of the AAA? ____________________________
2. Name one of the tips to lower your winter bill.
   _________________________________________________
3. What is the filing fee to become a Silver Haired Legislator? ________________________________

NAME: ______________________________________________
ADDRESS: ___________________________________________
CITY, STATE, ZIP: ___________________________________
PHONE #: _________________________________________

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NAME: ______________________________________________
ADDRESS: ___________________________________________
CITY, STATE, ZIP: ___________________________________
PHONE #: _________________________________________
Are you SeniorFit?

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AAA FUNDED PROGRAMS

Transportation
Demand Response
913-573-8308
(traveling within the Wyandotte County limits only)

Hearing Aid Program
Providence Medical Center
913-596-5143

Vision Screenings
Visiting Nurse Association
816-627-6484

Legal Services
Kansas Legal Services
913-621-0200

DATES TO REMEMBER

New Year’s Day
January 1, 2011

Martin Luther King Day
January 17, 2011

Unified Government offices closed

Presidents’ Day
February 21, 2010

Unified Government offices closed

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Emma Fonseca - Contributing Editor
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If you need assistance call the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging at 913-573-8531.

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging 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 Kansas Department on Aging at 1-800-432-3535.