

ELDER NETWORK NEWS



Quarters 3 & 4 2024

“Those 55 and better and their caregivers have the opportunity to thrive and lead rewarding lives.”

A Note from Kathy



The words that resonate for me, for 2024 rolling into 2025, are resilience and thrive. Resilience is the ability to adapt and grow from difficult life experiences. Resilience requires flexibility, optimism, self-awareness and support from others to-not only bounce back-but, thrive. Our mission is to give support to our communities and

receive support from volunteers, donors and supports-so, together-our communities thrive.

Facing a Dementia diagnosis certainly requires resilience to adapt to the changes that this diagnosis brings; and at Elder Network, we are committed to helping people find ways to thrive, as well. We are excited about the continued growth in our work-in dementia. We offered 8 Dementia Friends information sessions in 2024, with 102 attendees, and we kicked off 2025 with our first session in February, in Plainview. We strive to help everyone in our communities better understand dementia as a disease, and how to better support and interact with those they meet-who may have a mild cognitive impairment or dementia, such as Alzheimer's. In the fall of 2024, we were proud to partner with Mayo Clinic's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center to hold the inaugural, *After the Diagnosis Event*, which supports both caregivers of someone with dementia and people experiencing dementia. It was so well received that 3 more events will be offered in 2025, including, March 21st, July 11th and October 24th. This event is free, but space is limited. Call Elder Network for more information, and to register. Elder Network is also participating in the Winona Dementia-Friendly Community Week, planned for April 7th-11th, and invite everyone to participate. See Lisa's column on page 5, for more information.

Elder Network is expanding our Respite services in Dodge and Goodhue Counties-thanks to a grant from South Country Health Alliance. We will continue to grow our volunteer Respite program-that provides a break for caregivers, so that they may leave the home for 2-3 hours, knowing their care receiver is safe. We will also be expanding our Group Respite program-which brings together 3-5 people to have an enjoyable outing, while their caregiver gets a break. We are very grateful for this funding to make this work possible. We invite anyone interested in joining these programs or volunteering-to call for more information.

On page 2, is an important article on the benefits of Palliative Care. This wonderful, under-valued care takes a whole person approach to addressing a serious disease or condition, to improve the quality of life-while receiving medical care.

In November, we said goodbye to our Olmsted Program Coordinator for Friendly Visitor, Betsy Quattrin. We are thankful to Melissa Stone-with the help of Lois Freed-in covering this program work, until we hire a new staff person (coming soon).



Pickleball FunRaiser



Sr. Advocate helping a client

Senior Advocate Update: Recent Economic Changes are Affecting Older Adults

In these somewhat uncertain times, we are doing our best to thrive and move forward day-to-day, in the midst of the added stressors. For the low-income older adults that we see here at Elder Network, living on a fixed income just gets harder and harder. We are seeing more folks stressed about paying their bills, picking up their medicines and keeping their homes. It seems that those over 80 are struggling more than many. Our Senior Advocate, Kate Jirik, states at least 5 clients fell victim to unexpected financial change, when the Social Security Cost of Living Increase of 2024 dropped them out of eligibility for the Medicare Savings Programs. The Medicare Savings Programs allowed them to keep their Medicare B payment of \$185.00/month. For these people, \$185 dollars was a large sum of money to lose-monthly-and for most, this money would have paid for groceries and other necessities. However, help is still available for many. Our community is full of resources and people who can help; so if you or people you know are struggling, please reach out to the county-or to Kate Jirik, our Senior Outreach Advocate. Those who can help, want to do so, and Elder Network is on that list!

Read on to learn about new Powerful Tools for Caregivers sessions coming up, and all happenings at Elder Network.

Save the Date for our 12th Annual Gala, on September 20th, 2025 at the Rochester International Event Center.
Buy tickets in May and/or donate online at: www.elder-network.org

What is Palliative Care?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary tells us the word palliative (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) means to decrease the severity of a disease or condition without curing it. Palliative care is specialized medical care for a person living with a serious illness or condition. Symptoms of the serious illness can be treated while also undergoing treatments to cure or slow the progression of the serious illness. The palliative care team works together to reduce the symptoms and distress of the condition.

This team is made up of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, registered dietitians, pharmacists and chaplains who work together to help improve a person's quality of life.

Palliative care and hospice are similar in some ways, but not the same. Hospice is comfort-oriented care provided to a person with a terminal illness-usually during the last six months of life. The person receiving hospice care is not seeking treatment to slow or stop the life-limiting illness. Palliative care may begin at the time of diagnosis and provide support throughout the treatment process. Palliative care may eventually transition to hospice.

Palliative care is provided for people with serious illness, some of which include:

- Dementia
- Heart Failure
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- Cancer
- Parkinson's Disease

The palliative team will treat the following symptoms related to a serious illness:

- Pain
- Nausea
- Appetite Concerns
- Shortness of Breath
- Fatigue
- Constipation
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Spiritual Distress

The palliative care team can provide assistance with:

- Health Care Navigation
- Bereavement Support
- Advanced Care Planning
- Providing Health Care Reflective of a Person's Goals and Values
- Caregiver Support
- Coping skills

This specialized type of care can be provided in various locations. Certain regions of the United States have the capability to provide palliative care in a person's home. The medical clinic setting is another place to see a palliative care specialist. The palliative appointment may be paired with an appointment with the primary care provider or a specialty provider. Nursing homes are another common location for a person to receive palliative care.

Palliative care not only helps the patient, but also helps support the caregiver. Being present for palliative care appointments helps the caregiver be informed of what to expect. The palliative care team provides practical tools to help the caregiver have knowledge of how to provide certain cares at home-to help with comfort. The caregiver can receive social and psychological support from the palliative care team, as well as, the care recipient.

Palliative care is not just medical management of a serious illness, but rather, a whole person approach to care. Not only does it help the person with the serious medical illness, but it provides support to the caregiver, as well. Reaching out to the patient's primary care provider is the best way to find out if palliative care is right for a person. If you have questions about palliative care, please reach out to your primary care team.

-Abby LeVasseur, Nurse Practitioner- Geriatric Specialty Certified





Friendly Visitor Program

Our Friendly Visitor Program offers weekly meetings to elders facing loneliness or isolation.

Meetings with a matched volunteer visitor can be in person, by phone, or virtual to be flexible to a persons needs. This service brings meaningful socializing with the goal of adding some joy back into life.

Call our office at 507-285-5272 to sign up!

Chronic Conditions Support Group

This group is helpful to those experiencing chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, chronic pain, mental health concerns etc. Join this in-person group on the 2nd Wednesday, and/or online on the third Wednesday, from 1-2pm.

Transportation

Our transportation program is a curb-to-curb service for non-driving adults, aged 55+, in Olmsted County.

We also work towards increasing awareness of the need for transportation services for older adults, and function as a referral service for individuals searching for transportation. Our volunteer drivers are committed to making every ride a good experience. We are keeping updated on the detours for medical rides to downtown Mayo destinations. See page 7 for an assistive device that is available for all drivers with lower entry seats.

Volunteering has been shown to improve the quality of life of the volunteer and being part of an organized network creates more social connection. As a volunteer driver, you create your own schedule-weekly or monthly. Being a volunteer driver helps older adults live independently and maintain their dignity. The gift of conversation helps curb loneliness, and in just a few hours, you can make a huge difference in someone’s life. All you need is a car and a few hours of spare time to make miles of impact. for more details on becoming a volunteer driver.



Call Donna at 507-285-5272, to volunteer.

In-Person Rochester Caregiver Support Group

The Rochester office (1130 1/2 7th St. NW, Suite 205) hosts an in-person support group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, from 1-2:30pm, monthly. **Call 507-285-5272 to join and/or to learn more.**



Caregiver Support

Are you caring for a spouse, parent, adult child, or friend? Whether caring locally or long-distance, we can get you connected to an online caregiver tool, Trualta. This online MN Caregiving Portal, provides FREE online educational resources to help caregivers like you! It offers tools to: develop essential skills, learn about health issues, manage care for your care receiver and tips for taking care of yourself.

Elder Network has a variety of caregiver program options that can help. Non-Medical Companions can assist with tasks inside and outside of the home (i.e. meal prep, light household tasks, grocery shopping, errands, and assistance at appointments). Group Respite is being offered Monday-Friday-providing a safe community outing with a trained staff who has structured activities for those needing guidance and more social interactions. This program is designed to give a caregiver a break to do other things, while knowing their care receiver is having fun and being supervised. Volunteer Respite for caregivers allows for socialization and supervision up to 2-3 hours/week. Caregiver Supports: peer-peer or 1:1 caregiver consulting.

Needing some guidance and tools to overcome a difficult decision or just need resources to plan ahead? Caregiver Consulting can help. Caregiver Family Meetings can help everyone on the caregiver team to get on the same page with what the care receiver needs and wants. It’s important that everyone’s voice is heard-even if not all in agreement. Sharing the care is the key. To find out more about our Caregiver Supports, please call Holly at 507-285-5272.

Powerful Tools For Caregivers

A Class for Family Caregivers of Older Adults

This workshop is designed to help a caregiver take care of themselves while caring for someone else. Over a period of 6 weeks, this workshop will help participants develop stress-reducing skills, try new communication tools, and increase positive self-talk.

An upcoming class is scheduled in Kasson, in-person, from March 2025-April 2025. Classes will be held on Tuesdays, from 6-7:30pm.

Registration is open! Call 507-285-5272 to register for this class or to learn more.



Updates from Our Staff Members

Kate-Olmsted County Senior Advocate



For those 65 or older in America, health insurance is being provided through Medicare. For many low-income older adults, paying for the original Medicare part B coverage is a sizable percentage of their income and a hardship. Medicare wants to make sure that if this is the

situation, that people know that there are programs to help. With the Medicare Savings Programs, eligibility is based upon a Medicare beneficiary's or couple's income and assets. Eligibility criteria is based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guidelines. Applications are submitted through county social services offices. If one qualifies, at minimum, they help pay for the Part B premium. If a person has limited income and resources and are enrolled in a Medicare prescription drug plan or health plan that has Part D included, they may be eligible for Extra Help paying for prescription costs. Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy (LIS), which is also known as Extra Help, helps pay for Medicare Part D monthly premiums, deductibles, copays and coinsurance. Call Minnesota's Senior LinkAge Line at 800-333-2433, or Elder Network's Senior Advocate, to learn if you might qualify for any of these programs.

Holly-Caregiver Respite & Supports

Caregiver Respite needs are growing in Dodge and Olmsted County. We are looking for compassionate individuals to provide relief for the caregiver to complete out-of-home tasks, while confident that their loved one is with a competent respite volunteer. If you are interested in volunteering or receiving these services, please call Holly at 507-



285-5272. Caregiving can be so rewarding yet exhausting at the same time. We continue to meet individuals who are solo caring, and the demands are 24/7. Getting even a few hours of respite (a break), weekly, can make a huge difference to allow time for self-care for completing necessary tasks. When searching for more help and waiting for it to begin, a few tips to keep in mind are: nap or rest when possible, be mindful of energy level and complete tasks that are appropriate to match. Some routines may need to be adjusted to meet the current lifestyle needs. Prioritizing needs may need to be explored in order to conserve energy and strength. Remember that-to be human is to know our strengths, and also, our personal limitations. Being "super human" is not realistic. Be kind to ourselves by allowing for grace and acceptance of what is needed-without sacrificing our own health.

Friendly Visitor Program

Our Friendly Visitors Program is very active in the lives of many new clients, this year. Our Coordinator continues to be very busy with matching volunteers with clients who feel alone or isolated. The program enables our volunteers to bring a lifetime of experiences to enrich the lives of homebound older people, and to enrich their own lives, as well. Volunteers help clients in a variety of ways with socializing and accessing community resources. Those with a more artistic side, work on creative projects with their artistic clients. As always, we have more clients than volunteers. If you or a family member have ever considered volunteering to visit with an older adult who may have no family in the area or doesn't get much socialization, we would love to hear from you and match you with one of our wonderful clients! Call Melissa at 507-285-5272 or email her at melissas@elder-network.org.



Donna-Technology Assistance Program



iPads have become a part of the daily lives of older adults. The iPad is essentially a mini-computer and a great fit for older adults because they fall between a smartphone and a laptop. They work well for using the internet, connecting on social media, shopping, engaging healthcare tasks or streaming content. The larger screen is especially useful for those with low-vision. The 3 core components for learning are covered: provide a device, internet access and personalized training in the home. Call 507-285-5272 to learn more about Technology Assistance.

Melissa-Memory Café

We are recruiting new caregivers and people with memory loss to join Rochester's Memory Café! Memory Café is a global movement of meet ups for both people with memory loss and their caregiver to join together with others going through a similar journey. Rochester's Memory Café strives to provide a fun and relaxed meeting with guided conversation, reminiscing, games, and activities meant to spur conversation and orient the person with memory loss to the time of year. Join us every 3rd Thursday from 2-3pm at Zadeos Pizza for free coffee and snacks, socialization, and celebrating the seasons. Walk-ins welcome!





Wabasha County News

Caregivers, we are here to help you in Wabasha County! We have two strong caregiver support groups, a coach here to go to coffee with, and people to come in and give respite care to your loved ones while you get a break (hint: our Companion staff could even do some tasks for you while you are out enjoying lunch with a friend). Please, take advantage of these helps. A healthier and happier you is a much better caregiver for your loved one! If you are a caregiver and you would like support, we want to be there for you! Please join one of our support groups or reach out for caregiver coaching or to take advantage of our Respite Program.

Virtual Caregiver Support Group Meetings

Our ongoing Caregiver Support Group is offered via Zoom (**all counties of service are welcome**). It meets every Wednesday, from 10:30 a.m.–12:00 pm.

Wabasha Caregiver Support Group Meetings

Our in-person caregiver support group meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday, from 10:30 am–12:00 pm, at Faith Lutheran Church in Wabasha.

Wabasha Connections Cafe

Our Wabasha Connections Café meets at the United Church of Christ (317 W 2nd St-near the bridge), on the 2nd Thursday of the month from 1-2:30pm. This group is for those with dementia, older adults seeking community, and their caregivers. We laugh together, reminisce, drink coffee and have treats. Sometimes, we listen to music or special speakers, but we ALWAYS have fun! We look forward to meeting you!

Lake City Caregiver Support Group Meetings

In-person meetings every 2nd & 4th Tuesday from 10-11:30 am at the Lake City Public Library.

Aging Mastery Program

We are happy to announce that we are preparing to host an Aging Mastery Program this April-May! Come join us as we plan to make our next chapter a fulfilling/meaningful one in our journey, by setting goals and working on 6 different areas of life that contribute to our happiness. Watch for more details to come! Call today, to be added to the waitlist for the workshop!



Bonnie Sandberg - Wabasha County Program Manager 651-564-0351
Email: bonnies@elder-network.org

Winona County News



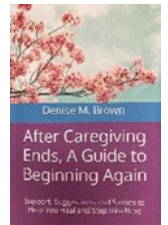
Here we grow! The Winona program is pleased to add two new team members to the Winona team—Lucy and Amy. Lucy has a wealth of experience in serving clients. She lives in the Winona area. Amy has extensive experience in senior services. She lives outside of Lewiston with her family. Both team members look forward to sharing their experience and passion in their Companion roles. Save-the-date! This year’s Winona **Dementia Friendly Community Week is scheduled for April 7-11, 2025**. Each day of the week is filled with educational events and fun activities to connect the Winona community with available resources. Plans include a Dementia Resource Fair, Forget Me Notes Concert, Art Walk, Emergency Care Planning, and Mind Over Matter, along with Music Therapy. Please plan to attend this interactive, week-long event!

In-Person Caregiver/Senior Support Group

Not currently meeting. Please reach out to Lisa if you would like a safe outlet to discuss your caregiving journey. Call 507-452-0580, today.

“After Caregiving Ends, Now What” Support Group

This grief support group, for people that have lost a loved one, meets every Monday via Zoom from 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Join us as we work through our grief together (**all counties of service are welcome**). Register by calling 507-285-5272, today.

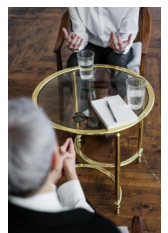


In-Home Help through Companion

Companion services are available in Winona County, serving older adults wherever they live, with social interaction, light housekeeping, grocery shopping, cooking meals, and transportation. Elder Network provides Respite services so that the caregiver can take several hours to themselves to get things done, knowing their care receiver is in good hands. Call 507-452-0580, today, to learn more/register.

Friendly Visitor

Friendly Visitors provide a visit weekly (1-2hours)-either in-person or over the telephone. Friendly Visitors provide much-needed relief from isolation and fun!



Lisa Lind - Winona County Program Manager 507-452-0580
Email: lisal@elder-network.org

Thank You to Our Funders!

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Gifts in Honor

Anonymous in honor of Kate Jirik
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 Lena A. Schichtl in honor of Patsy Mundale
 Linda Patterson in honor of Bonnie Voss
 Therese White in honor of Mary Doucette
 Tricia Schilling in honor of the Staff and Volunteers
 at Elder Network

Monthly and Quarterly Donors

Would you like to donate through direct deposit? Please call Kathy at 507-285-5272 to discuss this giving option. The individuals below have chosen this simple and sustainable option of giving:

- ♥ *Holly Brown*
- ♥ *Pat & Leroy Christofferson*
- ♥ *Kyle & Becca Herbstritt*
- ♥ *Dr. Diane Elizabeth Holland*
- ♥ *Kate Jirik*
- ♥ *Kay Lovett*
- ♥ *Tiffany Olson*
- ♥ *Roger Swanson*
- ♥ *Jason & Phoebe Wagner*
- ♥ *Dr. Nathan Mannix*



2024 Year End Results

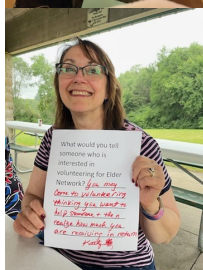
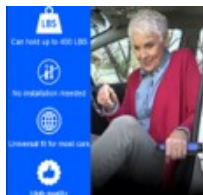
- ♥ Over 28,900 hours of services/programs were provided to over 4,180 participants.
- ♥ 2,588 rides scheduled and 2,065 rides provided to 163 older adults.
- ♥ Over 3,559 resources provided to over 556 older adults/caregivers.
- ♥ 100% of caregivers and 100% of older adults experienced improved emotional/mental health from services.
- ♥ Over 12,026 hours of respite provided throughout Dodge, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties.
- ♥ Over 1,845 hours of support group to older adults and caregivers throughout Southeastern Minnesota.



Elder Network Thanks You for Your Continued Support!

Individual Donors

Craig Allen
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 Fred & Mary Suhler
 Robert Ward
 Bruce Wendorf
 Dotty Willkomm
 Ken Zaiken



Drifters' Car Club of SE MN

The Drifters' Car Club of SE MN has generously supported our work through donations of blankets for isolated older adults, as well as funds to purchase safety handles that can be inserted into car doors for added stability when older adults are lifting themselves up and out of the vehicle. These handles help us serve older adults longer, as we are not able to provide licensed transfers (see image to left). These handles are specifically useful for our Companion and Transportation clients. Our Companions share, *"Like Tony the Tiger says, they're GREAT! With my car having lower seats, clients are able to use them to lower themselves down instead of just dropping down onto the seat. Using this handle to hang onto-to pull themselves up-and not depend upon me as much, makes it easier as well."* Encouraging independence where we can, is so important!

Memorial Gifts

Anonymous in memory of Anna Shafranek

Anonymous in memory of Roy S. Johnson Jr.

Bev Vogt in memory of Richard & Margaret Hanson

Colin Holmes in memory of Lois Holmes

Colm Fitzmaurice in memory of Enda Fitzmaurice

Diana Carey in memory of Estelle (Nikki) Carey

Ivan Zenker in memory of John Pappas

Julie Miller in memory of Grace Martin

Kathy Johnson & Mike Digre in memory of
Ann Bock

Ken & Sandy Wagner in memory of

Aaron & John Dube'

Linda Diedrich in memory of Ken Diedrich

Marian Wilke in memory of Myron Wilke

Mary Bulau in memory of Robert Bulau

Mary Boyne in memory of Bill Boyne

Sharon Haack in memory of Valentine Kellam

Susanne Daood in memory of Joni Butler



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Winona Office:
507-452-0580



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Drivers Wanted

Safe drivers are wanted to transport older adults in Olmsted County. Flexible scheduling during days!

Friendly Visitors

Spend 1-2 hours on the phone or in-person, per week, to help an older adult feel less isolated.
Volunteers needed in Winona, Wabasha and Olmsted Counties.

Event Volunteers

Assist Elder Network with planning and hosting our 12th Annual Fall Fling Gala September 20th, 2025.
Volunteers are needed for a variety of roles: planning, publicity, and event-day helpers.

Technology Assistance Volunteers

Many of Elder Network's clients are learning to use technology to maintain social connections and access telehealth appointments. *Volunteers needed in Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties. No experience needed just a willingness to learn!*

Caregiver Respite Volunteers

Volunteers devote 2-3 hours to supporting a caregiver in completion of daily living activities. Volunteers offer active conversation, play games, make a favorite treat, or go for a ride. Interested volunteers can work out arrangements according to their schedule to accommodate the needs of clients on an individual basis.

Companions

We are seeking individuals who are passionate about working with older adults to assist with light housekeeping, errands, meal preparation, etc. *Paid Companions are needed in Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties. Call 507-285-5272, today!*