

GOLDEN YEARS

Senior Life Solutions available to assist with life changes

Becoming an older adult is not only a natural part of the aging process, but it can be a beautiful part as well.

For some, aging can be a time for a change, reconnection, self-reflection, and self-discovery. Unfortunately for others, aging may be a time of loneliness, fear, and self-doubt.

Providence Medical Center's Senior Life Solutions program wants you to know that these negative feelings do not have to be a normal part of the aging process. Feeling down every once in a while, is a normal part of life, but if these feelings last a few weeks or months, you may be dealing with something more serious.

If you or someone you know has experienced any of the following symptoms, you may be experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging:

- Anxiety
- Changes in appetite
- Depression
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feelings of sadness or grief lasting more than two weeks
- Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness
- Loss a spouse or close family member



Members of the Senior Life Solutions program include (left) Ashley Rees, Office and Patient Coordinator, Theresa Long, PLMHP, PLADC, MSPC, BSMT (ASCP) Therapist and Elizabeth Offner, RN, Program Director.

- Loss of energy
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Recently experienced a traumatic event.

Providence Medical Center's Senior

Life Solutions is an intensive outpatient group therapy program designed to meet the unique needs of individuals typically 65 and older experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging.

Following an individual assessment, Senior Life Solutions participants meet up to three times per week in a supportive, encouraging group setting.

The program staff includes a board-certified psychiatrist, licensed therapists, a registered nurse, and other professionals dedicated to the emotional well-being of the seniors in our community.

Family members, physicians, or other health professionals can refer individuals to the program.

For more information about Providence Medical Center's Senior Life Solutions program, call (402) 375-7958.

Be alert for scams

By Alissa Baier,
Galyen Boettcher Baier PC, LLO

Scams are on the rise as scammers are becoming more sophisticated in obtaining personal and financial information of the unsuspecting.

They target all demographics, and anyone can fall victim to a scam. However, the older population is specifically targeted in many instances.

Scammers initiate contact via mail, phone, or online. Most of the time they are trying to take your money. They pose as your family, friends, government agencies, churches, charities, and more. It seems like a legitimate letter, phone call, text, email, or social media message. This is how fraudsters catch you off guard. They get your attention and then will ask for your personal details and financial information or for you to send money or gifts cards.

Examples of scams include IRS, Medicare, and Social Security impersonators, family emergency, grants, prizes, inheritance, romance, tech support, charity, trips, online orders, and free trial schemes.

Protect yourself and finances. Do not send money to anyone unless you verify with that person or organization directly

that it is actually who they say they are. If you aren't sure whether it is real, ask a family member, friend, or local advisor, such as your banker, attorney, or financial consultant.

If something seems too good to be true, it likely is. Some warning signs on correspondence you can check for are generic greetings, misspelling and improper grammar, incorrect or no address, names of organizations that don't exist, and very formal or forced language. Do your research and look it up online.

Stay alert for scams. Keep your personal and financial information secure, especially your Social Security number. Do not allow remote access to your computer. Know who you are dealing with. Be cautious when you are online shopping. Do not open suspicious links, texts, or attachments. Beware of unusual requests for money.

If you fall victim to a scam, you can report it to your local law enforcement. You may also report it to the Federal Trade Commission online or by phone at 1-877-382-4357.

Alissa Baier is an attorney with Galyen Boettcher Baier PC, LLO, a full-service law firm with locations in Laurel, Norfolk, and O'Neill.

Active senior living provides new options

Housing needs may change as adults grow older and their children move out. Adults nearing retirement may want to reduce their cost of living and could find a big house is more than they need at this stage in life.

According to the financial management resource The Motley Fool, in 2019 48 percent of seniors planned to downsize, while 52 percent wanted to remain in their existing homes.

A lower cost of living could be the primary motivator to sell, but less house to maintain and the extra free time that comes with fewer chores can be powerful motivators as well.

Many adults age 50 and older consider adult communities when seeking to downsize their homes. Senior home options are categorized based on the level of care they provide. "Active adult living" is a relatively new option that reflects a growing desire for residences

that afford aging adults a chance to downsize their homes and engage in their favorite activities.

Active adult living, leisure living or active adult communities include single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums, and other housing options within a community that offers an array of amenities and services. According to Retirement Living, residents in active adult communities enjoy country club settings with amenities like swimming pools, clubhouses, golf courses, exercise centers, walking trails, computer labs, hobby centers, and even on-site restaurants.

Active adult living communities may provide transportation options and have their own travel clubs. Though active adult residences do not typically provide medical services, many communities are

See ACTIVE, page 2

What to expect from cataract surgery

Cataracts are a clouding of the lens of the eye that can cause blurry vision and increase glare from lights. The Mayo Clinic indicates that cataracts can make it difficult for people to carry out their normal activities or interfere with treatment of other eye problems. In such instances, doctors may recommend cataract surgery.



The American Academy of Ophthalmology says cataract surgery involves removing the lens of the eye when it's cloudy. A cloudy lens can make people feel like they are looking through a foggy or dusty car windshield. That's because a cataract-plagued lens cannot refract light rays effectively. Many images appear hazy and blurry, or less colorful. Surgery is the only way to effectively treat cataracts. The cloudy lens is replaced with an artificial clear lens called an intraocular lens, or IOL, says the AAO.

Cataract surgeries have become rou-

time and most operations are successful. The National Institutes of Health says as many as 95 percent of people who undergo cataract procedures experience an improvement in the sharpness of their vision.

Replacement of the damaged lens is the

goal, but there are different types of cataract surgery that vary based on the size of the incision and the technology used to remove the cataract. Phacoemulsification is one popular procedure during which a surgeon will make a two- to three-millimeter-long incision in the front of the eye for an ultrasonic probe. The probe utilizes vibration to break up the cataract and removes the fragments with suction. A foldable lens is then inserted through the incision. Here are some things to expect from cataract surgery.

- A week or more before the surgery an ultrasound test will measure the size and shape of the eye. This helps to determine which type of IOL will later be inserted

and become a permanent part of the eye.

- IOLs can come with different features, such as blocking ultraviolet light or being monofocal or bifocal in nature. Others correct astigmatism. An eye doctor will discuss which type of lens is best.

- Medicated eye drops may be prescribed before surgery to reduce the risk for eye infections.

- Patients may need to stop taking certain medications prior to surgery, particularly if they can increase bleeding risk. Also, doctors may advise patients to avoid solid food several hours before surgery and avoid drinking alcohol for a day prior.

- You will be awake for the procedure, but your eye will be numbed and you won't be able to see what the surgeon is

doing. Some doctors provide a sedative to help with relaxation.

- Typically the surgery is an out-patient procedure, meaning you'll be able to return home the same day. However, you will not be able to drive, so arrange for transportation.

- Medicated eye drops may be prescribed, and recovery may include limiting activities for a few days. Any eye discomfort should disappear after a couple of days. Eye patches and protective sunglasses also may be recommended.

Cataract surgery can give people a new lease on life through improved visual clarity. The procedure is relatively easy and successful for the majority of people who undergo it.



Active

(continued from page 1)

conveniently located close to local shopping centers and complexes, ensuring that the doctor's office is not that far away.

Other features of active living covered by homeowner's association fees include outdoor maintenance like landscaping, snow removal and sanitation services. Security, internet service and cable also may be included in the monthly fees. Active communities emulate the benefits afforded by all-inclusive vacations, where day-to-day details are handled by management so residents can focus on fun and leisure.

Unlike general neighborhoods, seniors may appreciate active living communities because they have access to an array of services within the community. Some

promote a resort vacation feeling, while others may focus on sports or cultural life. What's more, since age is restricted, residents know that many people in these communities have shared experiences.

Active adult communities also are amenable to adults who like to travel. Residents get the peace of mind to lock up their homes and leave knowing lawns will still be mowed and shrubs trimmed — removing signs that the residence is unoccupied. This is an ideal situation for a snowbird who spends time in a different location for part of the year.

Active adult living is the relatively new kid on the block for senior communities, filling an important niche for independent retirees and near-retirees.



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Outdoor activities that are perfect for seniors

The great outdoors beckons people of all ages. Fresh air can be hard to resist and the benefits of spending time outdoors are so numerous that it behooves anyone, including seniors, to answer the call of nature.

According to researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, human beings benefit both physically and psychologically from spending time in nature. Such experiences can reduce stress and help lower heart rates, potentially decreasing individuals' risk for cardiovascular disease. In addition, the Forest Service notes that spending time outside in green spaces has been linked to a lower risk of depression.

Seniors who are retired or even aging empty nesters who are still in the workforce can make great use of their free time by venturing into the great outdoors. The following are a handful of senior-friendly outdoor activities that provide a great reason to get off the couch and take in all that Mother Nature has to offer.

•Hiking: Hiking provides a great workout and an ideal opportunity to spend time in an idyllic setting. The U.S. National Park Service notes that hiking helps individuals build stronger muscles and bones, improves their sense of balance, has a positive effect on heart health, and can decrease the risk of certain respiratory problems. Hiking is an especially attractive outdoor activity for seniors, as many parks feature trails with varying degrees of difficulty, ensuring there's a trail for seniors whether they're



seasoned or novice hikers.

•Water aerobics: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that water-based exercises can be especially helpful individuals with chronic diseases, a category many seniors fall into. The CDC notes that one study published in the journal Arthritis & Rheumatology found that improves the use of joints affected by arthritis without worsening symptoms. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also notes that swimming can lead to improved health for people with diabetes and heart disease. Seniors can reap these benefits by going for a dip in their own backyard pools or a local body of water, such as a lake or ocean. Many swim clubs also offer discounted

memberships to seniors, making these another great and affordable way to reap the benefits of swimming.

•Fishing: Of course not all outdoor activities need to make seniors huff and puff. Fishing provides a great reason to get outdoors, and many individuals

devoted to fishing report feeling less stressed after a day spent casting for their favorite fish. Individuals who consume what they catch also can benefit by improving their diets, as the American Heart Association notes that consuming certain types of fish has been linked to a lower risk for heart disease and obesity.

•Volunteering: Local environmental groups often sponsor cleanups at parks and waterfront attractions like beaches and lakes. Volunteering with such organizations is a great way to get outside and give back, and working with like-minded individuals can be a great way for seniors to meet new people. In addition, a national study sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service in 2019 found that 88 percent of Senior Corps volunteers who initially reported a lack of companionship reported a decrease in feelings of isolation after volunteering.

The opportunities for seniors to enjoy the great outdoors are endless. Taking advantage of such chances can benefit seniors in myriad ways.

Did you know?

Getting out and about is a vital component of many seniors' daily lives, but it's important that aging men and women recognize how much exercise is healthy for them.

The Department of Health & Human Services notes that adults need a mix of physical activity to stay healthy. That mix should be a combination of moderate-intensity aerobic activities, which can include golfing, swimming and even gardening, and muscle strengthening activities like weightlifting that make the muscles work harder than usual.

The DHHS recommends adults combine 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week with at least two days of muscle-strengthening activities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that these guidelines are safe for individuals who are 65 and older, generally fit and have no limiting health conditions. Individuals who do not fit that criteria should consult with their physicians before beginning a new exercise regimen, as it's possible that they could be putting their health at considerable risk if they attempt to follow guidelines designed for people who are generally fit. It's also important that healthy seniors avoid overdoing it in regard to exercise.

Though the DHHS suggestions are the minimum recommendations, going too far beyond those guidelines without first consulting a physician could increase seniors' risk for injury, illness or even death.

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What seniors should know about herbal medicines

A lifelong commitment to healthy living can improve life expectancy and quality of life while reducing a person’s risk for various conditions and diseases, including cancer and heart disease.

Healthy lifestyle choices like eating a nutritious diet and exercising regularly can greatly reduce a person’s risk for vari-



ous ailments, but such choices don’t eliminate that risk entirely. As a result, even health-conscious men and women may need to rely on medication to stay healthy. That’s especially true for seniors since age is a risk factor for various conditions.

A recent analysis that appeared in the Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics examined nearly 1,300 published articles that focused on the use of herbal supplements by elderly patients. Though only 16 of those articles met the researchers’ criteria, the analysis concluded that herbal supplement usage is common among elderly patients, as was a lack of dialogue about such supplements between medical professionals and seniors. A

concerted effort to initiate such dialogue on the part of both patients and health care providers can help shed light on herbal medicines so people taking them, including seniors, can learn more about what they’re putting into their bodies.

What are herbal medicines?

The National Health Service of the United Kingdom, a widely respected and publicly funded health care system, describes herbal medicines as those with active ingredients made from plant parts like leaves, roots or flowers. Because herbal medicines are made from plant parts, many people assume they’re safe to take without consulting a physician. However, the NHS urges people to treat herbal medicines with the same care and respect as they would more conventional medicines. Herbal medicines can affect the body in various ways. A frank discussion with a physician can shed light on the potential side effects of herbal medicines and whether or not they’re safe.

Why should seniors be concerned about herbal medicines?

The NHS notes that seniors taking other medications may experience problems if they begin taking herbal medicines as well.

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, notes that more well-designed studies are necessary to fully evaluate interactions between herbal medicines and prescription drugs. However, the NCCIH notes that some evidence points to some harmful effects of mixing the two. For example, the NCCIH reports that prolonged exposure to concentrated garlic extracts may reduce the efficacy of some drugs. The potential for these types of interactions should be enough to compel seniors to think twice before taking herb-

al medicines without first consulting their physicians. In addition, the NHS has developed a list of various types of people for whom herbal medicines may not be suitable, and that list includes the

elderly.

Seniors considering herbal medicines should discuss the pros and cons of such products with their physicians prior to taking anything.

What seniors should know about social media safety

Seniors might not be the demographic individuals initially associate with social media. However, Pew Research notes that seniors’ social media usage has been steadily rising for a number of years, proving that individuals 65 and over are not tech-averse.

Pew data from 2019 indicates that 46 percent of individuals 65 and older use Facebook. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram can be a great way to stay connected with family and friends and stay up-to-date on community events. But social media usage is not without risks, especially in regard to users’ safety. Seniors without much social media experience can heed these safety tips as they navigate popular platforms and discover all they have to offer.

- Examine your account settings. Social media users can control their privacy settings so they can decide who can (and can’t) view their online activity. Each platform is different, but profiles set to public generally allow anyone to view individuals’ activity, so seniors should set their profiles to private to limit access to their information.

- Be mindful of your social media social circle. It’s easy to make virtual friends via social media, but seniors should be mindful of who they accept as online friends. Carefully consider each friend request and decide just how big or small you want your social media community to be. Many individuals pre-

fer to limit their online social circles to individuals they know well and want to stay in touch with, and that can serve as a good measuring stick when deciding whether or not to accept a friend request.

- Avoid sharing personal information. Seniors are no doubt aware that they should never share especially personal information, such as their Social Security number. However, seniors also should hesitate to share personal information like vacation plans. Seniors who post about upcoming trips could return home to find they’ve been victimized by criminals who scoured their social media accounts and learned when they were going to be away. A good rule of thumb is to keep personal information private and limit posts to information that is not overly specific or sensitive.

- Recognize the threat posed by scammers. Social media platforms have had varying degrees of success in regard to keeping their sites scam-free. But scammers find a way, and users must take steps to avoid being victimized. Never click on a link within a post from someone you don’t know and avoid anyone soliciting donations through social media platforms.

Seniors are engaging with social media more than ever. Such engagement requires seniors to be mindful of the many ways to protect their privacy when spending time online.

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Amazing benefits to seniors having pets

Pets bring much joy to the lives they touch. So it should come as no surprise that the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey, which was conducted by the American Pet Products Association, found that about 85 million families in the United States own a pet. In Canada, 7.5 million households are home to companion animals, states the PetBacker blog.

Pets offer companionship and unconditional love. While they are fitting for any family, seniors may find that having a pet is especially beneficial. The organization A Place for Mom, which helps match families with senior living residences, says pets provide a comfort system that produces measurable health results. Caring for pets and being around them can produce a chemical chain reaction in the brain that may help to lower stress hormones while also increasing production of the feel-good hormone serotonin.

This is not the only health benefit pets may provide. A recent study from the Mayo Clinic, which looked at 1,800 people between the ages of 25 and 64 who had healthy hearts, found that almost half owned a dog. Having a dog was likely to spur heart-healthy behaviors, like exercising with the pet, eating well and having ideal blood sugar levels.

Pets also provide emotional support and companionship that can help seniors — including those who may be divorced or widowed — feel more secure and happy. The National Poll on Healthy Aging found that, among respondents who had pets, 88 percent said their pets helped them enjoy life, and 86 percent said their pets made them feel loved. Seniors considering getting a pet can explore the many benefits to doing so.

•Reduce pain: A 2012 study published in Pain Magazine found therapy dogs provided “significant reduction in pain

and emotional distress for chronic pain patients.”

•Feeling of purpose: Caring for an animal not only stimulates physical activity, but it also can give seniors a reason to get

up and go, which equates to a feeling of purpose.

•Altered focus: Having a pet can help seniors focus on something other than physical or mental health issues and pre-

occupations about loss or aging, according to New York-based psychologist Penny B. Donnenfeld.

See PETS, page 7



Thank you gift

Four members of the Lutt family were the recipients of Quilts of Valor quilts in appreciation for their service in various branches of the military. They included (left) Andrew Lutt, who enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corp and later enlisted in the U.S. Army National Guard. He was deployed to Iraq. Jack Lutt was in the U.S. Army and Army National Guard Reserve. He served in Vietnam. Terry Lutt served in the U.S. Army and served in Germany. Randy Lutt enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in Korea. Lester Lutt, who was the father of Terry, Jack and Randy and grandfather of Andrew, served in the military during World War II and was the inspiration that led these men to pursue the Armed Services. The quilts were supplied by the Quilt Shop Quilters in Wakefield and presented to the men by Imogene Brasch and Sue Gilmore.

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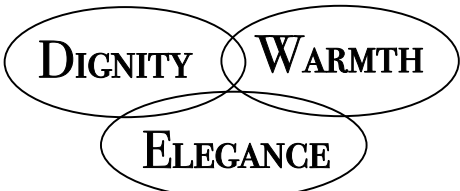
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Stop In & See For Yourself

Charitable giving can be a family affair

As families grow in size and overall wealth, a desire to “give back” often becomes a priority. Cultivating philanthropic values can help foster responsibility and a sense of purpose among both young and old alike, while providing financial benefits. Charitable donations may be eligible for income tax deductions (if you itemize) and can help reduce capital gains and estate taxes. Here are four ways to incorporate charitable giving into your family’s overall financial plan.

Annual Family Giving

The holidays present a perfect opportunity to help family members develop a giving mindset. To establish an annual family giving plan, first determine the total amount that you’d like to donate as a family to charity. Next, encourage all family members to research and make a case for their favorite nonprofit organization, or divide the total amount equally among your family members and have each person donate to his or her favorite cause.

When choosing a charity, consider



how efficiently the contribution dollars are used — i.e., how much of the organization’s total annual budget directly supports programs and services versus overhead, administration, and marketing. For help in evaluating charities, visit the Charity Navigator website, charitynavigator.org, where you’ll find star ratings and more detailed financial and operational information.

Estate Planning

Charitable giving can also play a key role in an estate plan by helping to ensure that your philanthropic wishes

are carried out and potentially reducing your estate tax burden.

The federal government taxes wealth transfers both during your lifetime and at death. In 2021, the federal gift and estate tax is imposed on lifetime transfers exceeding \$11,700,000, at a top rate of 40%. States may also impose taxes but at much lower thresholds than the federal government.

Ways to incorporate charitable giving into your estate plan include will and trust bequests; beneficiary designations for insurance policies and retirement plan accounts; and charitable lead and charitable remainder trusts. (Trusts incur upfront costs and often have ongoing administrative fees. The use of trusts involves complex tax rules and regulations. You should consider the counsel of an experienced estate planning professional and your legal and tax professionals before implementing such strategies.)

Snapshot of 2020 Giving

Despite the pandemic and economic downturn, 2020 was the highest year for charitable giving on record, reaching \$471.44 billion. Giving to public-society benefit organizations, environmental and animal organizations, and human services organizations grew the most, while giving to arts, culture, and humanities and to health organizations declined.

Donor-Advised Funds

Donor-advised funds offer a way to receive tax benefits now and make charitable gifts later. A donor-advised fund is an agreement between a donor and a host organization (the fund). Your contributions are generally tax deductible, but the organization becomes the legal owner of the assets. You (or a designee, such as a family member) then advise on how those contributions will be invested and how grants will be distributed. (Although the fund has ultimate control over the assets, the donor’s wishes are generally honored.)

Family Foundations

Private family foundations are similar to donor-advised funds, but on a more complex scale. Although you don’t necessarily need the coffers of Melinda Gates or Sam Walton to establish and maintain one, a private family foundation may be most appropriate if you have a significant level of wealth. The primary benefit (in addition to potential tax savings) is that you and your family have complete discretion over how the money is invested and which charities will receive grants. A drawback is that these separate legal entities are subject to stringent regulations.

These are just a few of the ways families can nurture a philanthropic legacy while benefiting their financial situation. For more information, contact your financial professional or an estate planning attorney.

Bear in mind that not all charitable organizations are able to use all possible gifts, so it is prudent to check first. The type of organization you select can also affect the tax benefits you receive.

All investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal, and there is no guarantee that any investment strategy will be successful.

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Why it pays for seniors to maintain good credit

The benefits of maintaining good credit include looking more reliable in the eyes of prospective employers and securing lower mortgage interest rates when buying a home. Those rewards can benefit anyone, but they're especially enticing to young people.

But what about seniors? Do individuals stand to benefit significantly from maintaining good credit into their golden years?

According to the credit reporting agency Experian, senior citizens tend to have the best credit scores of any consumer demographic. That could be a by-product of years of financial discipline, and there are many benefits to maintaining that discipline into retirement.

•Home buying and borrowing: Buying a home is often considered a big financial step forward for young people, but that doesn't mean aging men and women are completely out of the real estate market.

In its 2020 "State of the Nation's Housing" report, the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University reported that the share of homeowners age 65 and over with housing debt doubled to 42 percent between 1989 and 2019. In addition, 27 percent of homeowners age 80 and over were carrying mortgage debt in 2019. Maintaining strong credit after retirement can help homeowners who still have mortgage debt get better terms if they choose to refinance their mortgages. Even seniors who have paid off their mortgages can benefit from maintaining good credit if they decide to downsize to a smaller home but cannot afford to simply buy the new home outright.

•Rewards: Retirement is often associated with travel, recreation and leisure. Such pursuits can be more affordable when seniors utilize rewards-based credit cards that help them finance vacations, weekend getaways and other expenses associated with traveling. Seniors who

maintain strong credit ratings into their golden years may have more access to the best travel-based rewards cards than those whose credit scores dip in retirement.

•Unforeseen expenses: No one knows what's around the corner, but savvy seniors recognize the importance of planning for the unknown. The COVID-19 pandemic seemingly came out of

nowhere, and among its many ripple effects was the sudden job loss experienced by seniors.

The JCHS report found that 21 percent of homeowners age 65 and over had reported loss of employment income related to the pandemic. Unforeseen medical expenses also can compromise seniors' financial freedom. Maintaining a strong credit rating into older adulthood

can help seniors navigate such financial uncertainty more smoothly. Such a strategy can help seniors secure low-interest loans or credit cards that can help them pay down sudden, unforeseen expenses without getting into significant debt.

The importance of a strong credit rating is often emphasized to young people. However, a strong credit rating can be equally beneficial for seniors.

Hobbies for seniors residing in assisted living communities

Assisted living facilities are a vital resource for aging individuals. Data from the American Health Care Association® and the National Center for Assisted Living® indicates that more than 811,000 people reside in assisted living facilities across the United States.

Assisted living facilities have changed dramatically over the years, making them ideal options for adults who may need varying degrees of help with daily activities. Such facilities can help with activities like bathing and preparing meals, but they also can help residents find and explore new or existing hobbies. As individuals adjust to life in assisted living facilities, finding new hobbies or rediscovering old passions can be a great way to connect with fellow residents.

•Reading: Reading is a rewarding activity that can greatly benefit seniors and provide an engaging pastime for those with limited mobility. Many assisted living facilities offer activities that are designed to foster communication between residents and a book club can do just that. What's more, reading every day may be especially valuable for people age 65 and older. A 2018 study published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry found that dementia risk was considerably lower among men and women 65 and older who participated in intellectual activities like reading than it was among seniors who did not engage in



such pursuits.

•Gardening: AARP notes that gardening provides a host of health benefits that go beyond ensuring fresh fruits and vegetables will be on the dinner table. For example, vitamin D is vital to bone health, which is important for aging men and women who are vulnerable to osteoporosis. A recent study from researchers in Italy found that exposure to sunlight can help older adults get adequate amounts of vitamin D. Signing up for a gardening club can be a great way for seniors to get some exercise, enjoy time outside the assisted living facility and promote strong bones.

•Art therapy: According to the Chicago Methodist Senior Services, art therapy is a creative form of therapy designed to help older adults with memory loss or those experiencing mental or physi-

cal stress. The Harvard Medical School notes that recent research has indicated that engaging in creative activities may be more effective at delaying cognitive decline than merely appreciating creative works. A study from researchers in Germany found that retirees who painted and sculpted had greater improvements in spatial reasoning and emotional resilience than a similar group who attended art appreciation classes.

Many assisted living facilities offer art therapy or similar programs to residents, and enrolling in such programs can promote social interaction and provide numerous benefits to men and women over 65.

Assisted living facilities offer an array of programs designed to help residents develop rewarding hobbies that can benefit their long-term health.



Pets

(continued from page 5)

•Increased physical activity: Pets require care, and that interaction can get seniors moving more than if they didn't have a pet.

•Improved health: Ongoing research from Harvard Medical School has found dog owners have lower blood pressure, healthier cholesterol levels and lower risk of heart disease than those who don't own a dog.

•Stick to routine: Caring for pets helps seniors maintain a routine. Having structure after retirement can be important to ward off risk of depression. Staying on top of feeding, grooming and other pet needs also can help prevent cognitive decline.

Pets bring many benefits to their owners' lives, and they may be the perfect remedy for seniors looking for a friend and purpose.

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They always touched him as they walked by. Exceptional job, always questioned if we needed anything.

Very grateful."

-from a Hospice patient family member.

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-from a Home Health patient.

Providence Home Care has been providing quality patient care within a 45-mile radius of the Wayne for over 30 years. We currently serve communities in Madison, Stanton, Dixon, Cedar, Wayne, Dakota, Cuming, Pierce and Thurston county.

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