

January/February/March 2021

MISSION

To promote the independence and quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities, and their families.

COVID-19 OPERATIONS UPDATES:

Bridges Community Center continues to offer programs and services keeping the health and safety of patrons, volunteers and staff as a top priority.

Face-to-face appointments will be available beginning **Monday, February 22nd**

Please call Bridges at **815-431-8034** to schedule an appointment

Due to limited space and social distancing requirements, we will be unable to accept walk-in appointments and visitors until further notice

Thank you to Everyone who contributed to our "Help Us Help Seniors" Campaign

During the COVID-19 emergency, our community has shown their generosity in so many ways.

As our budgetary shortfall continues, we now more than ever can use the support of our participants and the community.

Please consider a donation today!

Visit www.alternativesforyou.org and click the "Donate" button or mail a donation check to:

Bridges Community Center
809 21st Street, Peru, IL 61354



IMPORTANT DATES

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Starts.....1/1

Office Closure (MLK, Jr. Day).....1/18

Office Closure (President's Day).....2/15

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Ends.....3/31



BRIDGES COMMUNITY CENTER STAFF

Executive Director: Kathy Weiman

Program Director: Erin Hanna

Program Coordinator: TBA

Information/Outreach Specialist: Jennifer Johnson

Volunteers: Gerry Kupfer
Rita Studzinski
Robert Anselme Jr.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Amy Gillespie	Megan Forristall
Debbie Pusateri	Susan Glassman
Gerry Kupfer	Tammy Humpage
Jack Wayland	Jessica Stayton

Board membership is now open
looking for new members!

If you are interested in volunteering or joining our Advisory Board contact Erin Hanna 815-431-8034

Stay Connected

Happy Thoughts By: Ruth Stephan

Is there something that you have always wanted to read?

But never allotted time to just to be.

Is there someone special that needs to know?

Writing a letter can tell them so.

Does someone pop in your mind?

Would love to hear from you if you took the time.

Is there something to do or say that would make this a better day?

Take the first step and you will see,
You'll feel better too and a better day it can be...

Know Someone who could use a call?

Ring for Care is there to provide friendly check-in calls to participants who have a need in any of the following areas:

- Social/Emotional support
- Community resource information
- Connection and activities

Call Bridges **815-431-8034** to make a referral



Safe in Winter: Falls

If you have to go out, stay safe:

- * **Make sure steps and walkways are clear before you walk.** Be especially careful if you see wet pavements that could be iced over.
- * **Clear away snow and salt your walkways** at home.
- * **Wear boots with non-skid soles** – this will prevent you from slipping.
- * **If you use a cane**, replace the rubber tip before it is worn smooth.
- * **Consider an ice pick-like attachment that fits onto the end of the cane** for additional traction.

Virtual Programming

Tai Chi

Tai Chi is a noncompetitive, self-paced system of gentle physical exercise and stretching. There is growing evidence that this mind-body practice has value in treating or preventing many health problems. Virtual classes are underway:

Every Monday (except for dates when our office is closed)

10:00 am

**To request a link for the Zoom session,
Email: danretoff@yahoo.com**

OR

Text or call

815-488-4249 for more information

Like Us On Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/bridgescommunitycenter/>

COVID-19 Vaccine Information

Information Needed to Register Online for a Vaccine

- **First & Last Name**
- **Town of Residence**
- **Phone Number**
- **Email Address**
- **Your Phase 1b Category:**
 - Over 65 years of age
 - Front line Workers (fire, law enforcement, 911 workers, security personnel, school officers)
 - Education (Pre-K through 12th grade, and child care: teachers, principals, support, day care workers)
 - Food and Agriculture
 - Manufacturing
 - Corrections Workers and Inmates
 - United States Postal Services Workers
 - Public Transit Workers (Flight Crew, Bus Drivers, Train Conductors, Taxi Drivers, Ride Sharing Services)
 - Grocery Store Workers
 - Shelters/Adult Day Care



Protect Yourself

AVOID COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

As COVID-19 vaccine distribution begins, here are signs of potential scams:

- You are asked to pay out of pocket to get the vaccine.
- You are asked to pay to put your name on a vaccine waiting list or to get early access.
- Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources.
- Marketers offering to sell or ship doses of the vaccine for payment.

✓ **Protect Yourself. Do not give out your personal information to unknown sources.**

! If you believe you have been the victim of COVID-19 fraud, immediately report it to:

- HHS-OIG Hotline: 1-800-HHS-TIPS | tips.hhs.gov
- FBI Hotline: 1-800-CALL-FBI | ic3.gov
- CMS/Medicare Hotline: 1-800-MEDICARE



For accurate, up-to-date information about COVID-19, visit:

oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus
fbi.gov/coronavirus
justice.gov/coronavirus



HHS
Office of
Inspector
General



Federal
Bureau of
Investigation



Department
of Justice



Media Release 1/13/21:

“What to Expect After Individuals Eligible for Phase 1B Complete the COVID-19 Vaccine Notification Form”

Any individual who needs assistance completing the COVID-19 Vaccine Notification form or does not have computer/internet access, please contact Bridges Community Center or Mendota Area Senior Services (MASS).

These agencies have agreed to provide assistance to anyone 65 years and older:

- **Bridges Senior Center – (815) 431-8034**
- **Mendota Area Senior Services (MASS) – (815) 539-7700**

Please note if you do not have an email address, your information will be taken & given to LCHD to be contacted later. This process will be slower than online registration.

Please watch for more information from LaSalle Co. Health Department on their website: www.lasallecounty.org, social media pages, & local media.

Benefits, Programs & More

Utility Assistance

Having difficulties paying your heating bills this winter? You may qualify for assistance.



Please contact **Tri-County Opportunity Council** for more information about their available programs:

(815)223-2333

Or check out their website for eligibility Requirements at:

www.tcochelps.org/liheap

Updates from the Office of IL Secretary of State:

- Driver's Services Facilities reopened statewide **Monday, January 4, 2021**
- Driver's license and ID card expiration dates have been extended to **June 1, 2021**
- Online services are still encouraged due to anticipated long lines
- The following services can be completed online at **www.cyberdriveillinois.com**:
 - Renew a license plate sticker
 - Renew a valid driver's license for qualifying drivers
 - Renew a valid ID card for those age 22-64 (seniors 65 and older have free, non-expiring IDs) & more....

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period **January 1-March 31, 2021**

What can I do?

If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage), you can switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage).

You can drop your Medicare Advantage Plan and return to Original Medicare.

You'll also be able to join a Medicare drug plan.

What can't I do?

Switch from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan.

Join a Medicare drug plan if you're in Original Medicare.

Switch from one Medicare drug plan to another if you're in Original Medicare

Note

If you enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan during your Initial Enrollment Period, you can change to another Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage) or go back to Original Medicare (with or without a drug plan) within the first 3 months you have Medicare.

Medicare D Open Enrollment Savings

Bridges' staff and volunteers completed **212** Medicare D Enrollments

with a total savings of **\$264,463.67**

That's an average of **\$1,247.47** on each beneficiaries' prescription costs!



Medicare Advantage Plans

How do Medicare Advantage Plans work?

Medicare Advantage Plans, are an “all in one” alternative to Original Medicare. If you join a Medicare Advantage Plan, you still have Medicare. These plans include Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance), and usually Medicare drug coverage (Part D).

Covered services in Medicare Advantage Plans

Most Medicare Advantage Plans offer coverage for things Original Medicare doesn't cover, like some vision, hearing, dental, and fitness programs (like gym memberships or discounts). Plans may offer coverage for services like transportation to doctor visits, over-the-counter drugs, and services that promote your health and wellness. Check with the plan before you enroll to see what benefits it offers, if you might qualify, and if there are any limitations.

Rules for Medicare Advantage Plans

Medicare pays a fixed amount for your care each month to the companies offering Medicare Advantage Plans. These companies must follow rules set by Medicare. They can have different rules for how you get services, like:

- Whether you need a referral to see a specialist
- If you have to go to doctors, facilities, or suppliers that belong to the plan

Costs for Medicare Advantage Plans

In many cases, you'll need to use doctors and other providers who are in the plan's network and service area for the lowest costs. Some plans won't cover services from providers outside the plan's network and service area. Each Medicare Advantage Plan can charge different out-of-pocket costs.

Drug coverage in Medicare Advantage Plans

Most Medicare Advantage Plans include prescription drug coverage (Part D). You can join a separate Medicare Prescription Drug Plan with certain types of plans that:

- Can't offer drug coverage (like Medicare Medical Savings Account plans)
- Choose not to offer drug coverage (like some Private Fee-for-Service plans)

You'll be disenrolled from your Medicare Advantage Plan and returned to Original Medicare if both of these apply:

- You're in a Medicare Advantage HMO or PPO &
- You join a separate Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.

Do Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policies work with these plans?

Medigap policies can't work with Medicare Advantage Plans.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SCHEDULE
AN APPOINTMENT, CALL BRIDGES
815-431-8034**

Are you a caregiver to.....

- ✿ An older adult age 60 and over?
- ✿ An adult age 18-59 with a disability?
- ✿ Or a grandparent raising a grandchild?

Need support or information? Call 815-431-8034

5.8 million Americans age 65 & older are living with Alzheimer's or a related dementia.

The lifetime costs of family care for a person with dementia average over \$200,000 or about \$273.00 a month.

Through funding provided for “**Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders**”, we have support for families—older adults with dementia and those caring for loved ones with dementia—to help cover the costs of medical supplies, adaptive equipment, in-home monitoring devices, and more.

If interested, please call 815-431-8034.

Caregiver Care Packages Are Available!

Brought to you by funding from WIAAA

If you or someone you know is currently in need of caregiver support, please contact us.

Each care package will be packed full of resources to encourage, educate and entertain.

We will need the caregiver’s name, address and relationship to care recipient in order to mail them a package.



Please call Erin at **309-277-0167** or email **ehanna@alternativesforyou.org**.