

AZ LINKS NEWSLETTER

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Spring Arrives Amid Changes!

As anticipated in the last newsletter, the ushering in of Arizona's new Governor has led to some additional changes impacting ADRC partners. Timothy Jeffries was just approved by the Arizona Senate to join Governor Ducey's Cabinet as the new Director of the Department of Economic Security, and Lynn Larson was named Acting Assistant Director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services, replacing Melanie Starns. I'm sure I speak for all of the ADRC partners as I welcome Director Jeffries into his new role as leader of Arizona's largest public agency, and thank Ms. Starns for her leadership over the past several years. - **David Besst, ADRC Project Director**



The AAA-NACOG Launches its CARENECT Program

Submitted by Kurtis Kegley, Administrative Assistant, Area Agency on Aging-NACOG

The Area Agency on Aging – Northern Arizona Council on Governments (NACOG) has partnered with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and Critical Signal Technologies (CST-LTL) on their *carenect* program. The *carenect* program provides older adults with an in-home monitoring product different from anything else on the market, because it can be accessed anytime, giving the user an added sense of comfort and security. But *carenect* is not just for

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emergencies. With the push of a button, users can contact a care center representative with health-related questions or concerns, or to request assistance. According to the Area Agency on Aging - NACOG Director Mary Beals-Luedtka, "This innovative product essentially provides aging agencies with an additional set of eyes, delivering an extra level of support to ensure their clients are healthy and safe."

The Area Agency on Aging - NACOG's *carenect* program provides easy-to-use, customizable medical alert and medication management technology without long-term contracts or activation fees. Users are connected to the CST-LTL professional care center, which provides superior service and monitoring 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Every care center representative is CST-LTL certified with extensive training in care service and emergency response. With a signal from the senior or CST-LTL unit, care center representatives are instantly in touch with the user and have immediate access to personalized client files with instructions, key contact information and appropriate emergency response actions. For additional information about *carenect*, please contact Brandon Baxter at **877-521-3500**.



Announcing the Get Healthy Program in Region IV

Submitted by Jacqueline Romero, Health, Wellness, & Prevention Supervisor, WACOG Area Agency on Aging

The Western Arizona Council of Governments (WACOG) Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is launching the **Get Healthy** program in Region IV. The purpose of the program is to work within each community to develop healthy, active lifestyle options and educational opportunities for persons of all ages. WACOG - AAA is partnering with County Health Departments, Regional Center for Border Health, Inc., behavioral health organizations, Head Starts, hospitals, community leaders, and elected officials to effectively establish a community collaborative. Additionally, with the help of AmeriCorps VISTAs, each community will develop a strategic coordination plan that will guide that community's wellness activities.

Through the program, we hope to increase awareness and knowledge of the importance of preventative strategies that address the issues of falls, obesity, nutrition, dementia, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and HIV.

For more information about the **Get Healthy Program** and/or to get involved contact: Jacqueline Romero at **928-217-7158** or jacquelin@wacog.com



April 2015



Stacie Austin HERO of the ADRC

Submitted by David Besst and Tammy Pankey, Arizona Division of Aging and Adult Services

As part of a new regular newsletter feature designed to highlight the many special people that embody the "no wrong door" approach of AZ Links, we are proud to introduce the very first Hero of the ADRC, Ms. Stacie Austin, Administrative Assistant III for the Independent Living Supports Unit within the Arizona Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS).

A Hero of the ADRC is someone that demonstrates on a daily basis the skills and demeanor required to participate in a network designed to focus on the strengths and needs of the people we serve, making it easier for them to connect to the resources they need. Stacie does this while flashing a smile that always makes your day a bit brighter!

On a personal note, Stacie is from St. Louis, Missouri and has lived in Arizona since 1989. She has earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Human Services Management and has worked for the State a total of 22 years and has been with DAAS since July 2011. She is a single mother with one son, Ian, who is 20 years old and attending college. He is an athlete and is studying sports medicine.

THANK YOU, Stacie, for what you do EVERY DAY!



Phoenix OKs New Accessibility Symbol

Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL

You have seen the blue and white stick figure in the wheelchair everywhere – in parking lots, on buildings and in windows. The image is one of the most recognizable symbols in the world. Now you may start seeing a new image pop up around Phoenix. The city recently granted permission for businesses to replace the International Symbol of Access, which was created in 1969, with a new icon.

The new image shows a more active figure. It is still blue and white, but it emphasizes ability rather than disability, officials said. Advocates for the change cheered the move. "When you think about the old icon, you really see more of the chair versus the person. It's described as something that's unnaturally erect with mechanical parts," said Angelica Greene, a clinical program manager at Cigna. "But when you look at the new icon, you're looking at someone that's active and engaged, the person that's in control of their own environment and able to make decisions. Those are things that were not present when you look at the old icon." Greene led Cigna's efforts in Phoenix to approve the change. Cigna, a global health insurance service company, has promoted the change across the country.

Save the Date! 25th Anniversary ADA Gala Celebration

Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL

Looking forward to you joining us as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act!

What: Celebrating the passage of landmark legislation with a night of dinner, dancing and more!

When: Saturday, July 18, 2015

Where: Tempe Mission Palms
60 East 5th Street
Tempe, AZ 85281

Time: 6 PM - 11 PM

Sponsorships & Tickets: Soon to be available!

Website: <http://www.abil.org/2015ada/>

Questions: Contact David Carey at 602-443-0723 or davidc@abil.org.



The 2015 White House Conference on Aging

Submitted by Tammy Pankey, ILS Specialist, Arizona Division of Aging and Adult Services

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act, as well as the 80th anniversary of Social Security. The 2015 White House Conference on Aging is an opportunity to recognize the importance of these key programs, as well as to look ahead to the issues that will help shape the landscape for older Americans for the next decade. The White House is committed to hosting a White House Conference on Aging in 2015 and intends to seek broad public engagement and work closely with stakeholders in developing the conference. They also plan to use web tools and social media to encourage as many older Americans as possible to participate. They are engaging with stakeholders and members of the public about the issues and ideas most important to older individuals, their caregivers, and families. It is also encouraged for people to submit their ideas directly through the *Get Involved* section on their website www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov.

The White House Conference on Aging is launching a series of regional forums to engage with older Americans, their families, caregivers, and leaders in the aging field, and others on the key issues affecting older Americans. The forums are designed to help provide input and ideas for the 2015 White House Conference on Aging, which will be held in Washington, DC later this year. Phoenix was proud to be the host of the second regional conference on March 31, 2015. The forums are co-sponsored with AARP and co-planned with the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, a coalition of more than 70 of the nation's leading organizations serving older Americans. Participation is by invitation, but the events will be webcast to various locations. The purpose of the forums are for the conference committee to hear directly from the public on issues such as ensuring retirement security, promoting healthy aging, providing long-term services and support, and protecting older Americans from financial exploitation, abuse, and neglect. They will also help us to reach older Americans and their caregivers, advocates, and other stakeholders where they live.

The White House Conference on Aging represents an important step in working to ensure that Americans throughout the lifespan have the opportunity to learn and develop skills, engage in productive work, make choices about their daily lives, and participate fully in community life. In addition, the Conference is designed to assist the public and private sectors to be responsive to the needs of a diverse aging population and to promote the dignity and independence of and expand opportunities for current and future generations of older persons and their families. For more information click on the following link, www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov



Please Join Me in Welcoming...

Submitted by Tammy Pankey, ILS Specialist, Arizona Division of Aging and Adult Services

Lizabeth Woods joined the Department of Economic Security in January 2015 and serves as our State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Lizabeth stated that she is thrilled to be part of the Independent Living Supports Unit with the Division of Aging and Adult Services and is honored to serve consumers residing in Arizona long-term care facilities.

Lizabeth graduated from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and is a licensed social worker. Before moving to Arizona, she was the SHIP Coordinator at an Area Agency on Aging for 14 years and she was the Social Worker in a long-term care facility and County Department of Human Services. Many of you will have the opportunity to work with Lizabeth in the coming months. Please join me in welcoming Lizabeth to her new home.

“To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors.”

— [Tia Walker, *The Inspired Caregiver: Finding Joy While Caring for Those You Love*](#)



Submitted by Tammy Pankey, ILS Specialist, Arizona Division of Aging and Adult Services

Each May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) celebrates **Older Americans Month** to recognize older Americans for their contributions to the nation. In honor of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act the focus is on older adults taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making positive impact in the lives of others. The theme for 2015 is **“Get Into the Act.”**

When Older Americans Month was established in 1963, only 17 million living Americans had reached their 65th birthday. About one-third of older Americans lived in poverty and there were few programs to meet their needs. Interest in older Americans and their concerns was growing. A meeting in April 1963 between President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens led to designating May as “Senior Citizens Month,” the prelude to “Older Americans Month.”

ACL has published outreach materials to support communities celebrating Older Americans Month this May. To join ACL in recognizing older adults for their contributions to the nation, visit the [Older Americans Month section](#) of the ACL website.



Social Security Administration Expands Field Office Hours Nationwide

Submitted By Jack Burns, Public Affairs Specialist, Arizona, Social Security Administration

Social Security announced that effective March 16, 2015, as a result of Congress' approval of the fiscal year 2015 budget, the agency will expand its hours nationwide and offices will be open to the public for an additional hour on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Offices will continue to close to the public at noon every Wednesday so employees have time to complete current work and reduce backlogs.

"This expansion of office hours reaffirms our commitment to providing the people we serve the option of top-notch, face-to-face assistance in field offices even as we work to expand online services for those who prefer that flexibility," said Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security. "The public expects and deserves world-class customer service and thanks to approved funding, I am pleased we will continue our tradition of exceptional service."

More tax filing assistance...

Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL

It is not too late. You can do your taxes yourself using free software. Let **Free File** do the hard work for you with brand-name software or online Fillable Forms. You can prepare and e-file your federal return for free. Participating software companies make their products available through the IRS. Some also support state tax returns. Go to: <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Free-File:-Do-Your-Federal-Taxes-for-Free>.



Newsletter Submissions

Dear AZ Link Partners,

This is your newsletter – let us know what you would like to see included.

If you know a "HERO of the ADRC," please send their information our way. We are also interested in hearing about regional partners and the work they do. Please send any news or updates, information about new staff members, special projects, activities, calendar pages, any photos or brief notices that you may want to include in the newsletter to: TPankey@azdes.gov.

Next newsletter: June-July 2015

Deadline for submissions: June 15, 2015

I look forward to hearing from you all!

Caregiver Resource Line



Caregiver Advocate Volunteers

Toll-Free: 1-888-737-7494