

AZ LINKS NEWSLETTER

www.azlinks.gov



Welcome, David Besst!



Hello! My name is David Besst, and I'm the new Project Director for the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium, replacing Jutta Ulrich. It will be a difficult task to follow such a dedicated person as Jutta, as she has been the "guiding light" for the ADRC and AZ Links over the last several years! Jutta has moved on to a position within the Director's Office here at DES, and we certainly wish her well as she continues to serve the citizens of Arizona. Luckily, I've had the pleasure of working with Jutta side by side and I've been busy developing initiatives aligned to the ADRC, but specific to family caregivers. This familiarity should help as we move forward with significant enhancements to AZ Links, including the roll-out of a new website that will include a statewide searchable database of resources for Arizona families needing assistance. Many thanks to Jutta for her tireless efforts leading us to this point, and I look forward to working with all of you to make AZ Links a great resource for Arizona!

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Respite Vouchers Are Available Now!

Family caregivers work tirelessly and selflessly – often to the detriment of their own health and emotional well-being – to provide assistance to loved ones who are living with disabilities. The [Arizona Caregiver Coalition](#) aims to give these family caregivers temporary respite (a break) from their fulltime roles as caregivers as part of the new Lifespan Respite Voucher program. Respite Vouchers can be used by family caregivers to cover costs for in-home or facility-based respite care services that they secure on their own, so they can relax and enjoy a short break from their duties. Qualified caregivers who complete the application process are issued a voucher worth up to \$300. The caregiver is reimbursed up to \$12 an hour for each hour invoiced by the respite provider. Caregivers are responsible for any fees that exceed the maximum hourly rate of \$12. Caregivers can also use the [ArizonaRespiteRegistry.org](#) site to find experienced respite services.

For more information and to apply for a respite voucher, please call the Caregiver Resource Line:

1-888-737-7494



Mary Beals-Luedtka Re-Elected as Treasurer for the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Submitted by Jenny Ellringer, Administrative Assistant, Area Agency on Aging-NACOG

Mary Beals-Luedtka, Area Agency on Aging Director for Region III-NACOG, was recently re-elected as Treasurer for the Board of Directors for n4a. n4a is the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Mary has served on the board since 2006 as an alternate and board member. Mary's involvement on the board has afforded her the opportunity to engage with our Nation's leaders and give Northern Arizona a big voice. It has assisted her in her leadership in our Region to assure that Area Agency on Aging is on the cutting edge and engaged with national and state policies.

Mary recently stepped down as co-chair for the State Association of Area Agencies on Aging to focus on her role as an officer for n4a. Mary serves on the Executive Council, the Leadership Council, is Chair of the Finance Committee and serves on the ad hoc committee for Core Funding.

New Horizons Transportation Services

Submitted by Jean Lasher, Community Information Coordinator/Outreach, written by Liz Toone, Executive Director, New Horizons

Since our final fiscal year numbers are in, I want to take a moment to highlight the accomplishments of our transportation department. Our transportation crew under the leadership of Supervisor Larry Richards and with assistance from office staffers Cindy Elbert and Kelly Bowker, provided 23,334 rides during the past fiscal year, chiefly to residents of Western Yavapai County.

Astonishingly, our wonderful drivers cumulatively logged in 348,892 miles of trips to essential destinations like doctor offices and grocery stores. To put this in perspective, our drivers drive enough distance to have gone to the moon and halfway back home! All this and only a couple of very minor incidents. On behalf of New Horizons consumer, board and staff, thank you for a job well done.

Remember that rides are available Monday through Friday and on Saturdays by appointment. Please call **Transportation at 928-775-8870** in advance (several days if possible) to schedule rides.





Region IV Conference on Aging

Submitted by Jacky Romero, Program Development Specialist, WACOG Area Agency on Aging

Western Arizona Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging's Region IV Conference on Aging will be held on **Thursday, January 30th, 2014**, at the Pivot Point Conference Center in Yuma, Arizona.

The conference will feature three different tracks: General Aging Issues, Elder Abuse, and Caregiver. In addition, there will be two general session presentations. Some of the topics for the breakout sessions will include "Legislative Training/How to be a Good Advocate;" "Today and What the Future Holds;" "Late Life Domestic Violence;" and "The Basics of Alzheimer's Disease."

There will also be an opportunity for attendees to participate in the Virtual Dementia Tour.

For more information regarding sponsorship opportunities and/or registration information you can contact Jacqueline Romero at (928) 271-7158 or jacqueline@WACOG.com.

2014 Don Pooley Greens for Seniors to Benefit PCOA

Submitted by Debbie Conover, Development Coordinator, Pima Council on Aging

The 2014 Don Pooley Greens for Seniors Annual Golf Tournament will be held on **Saturday, April 26, 2014**, at the spectacular new Sewailo Golf Club at the Casino Del Sol Resort, 5655 W. Valencia Road in Tucson. The 18-hole, par 72 championship golf course was designed by Ty Butler and Notah Begay III (the only American Indian to compete on a PGA). The desert oasis style course features lush plantings and a picturesque stream system with lakes and waterfalls to create a unique golfing experience. Go Golf Arizona is calling this course "Arizona's newest and most diverse and challenging course in years." Proceeds from the event will benefit Pima Council on Aging to support the many programs for the aging and their families.

The event kicks off with a check-in and breakfast at 8am and a shotgun start at 9am. PGA golfer Don Pooley, winner of the 1980 B.C. Open, 1987 Memorial Tournament, and the 2002 U.S. Senior Open, will present awards to tournament winners at the luncheon. Golfer entry fee is \$150.

For more information, contact Debbie Conover-520-305-3401.

Email dconover@pcoa.org.

**Date and Time: Saturday, February 22, 2014
8:00am to 1:00pm**

Venue Location: Sewailo Golf Club at the Casino Del Sol Resort, 5655 W. Valencia Road, Tucson, AZ 85757; 520-324-9000

Restructuring at PCOA Breathes Energy into Grassroots Efforts

Submitted by Carolyn Cortesi, Director of Community Initiatives, Pima Council on Aging (PCOA)

The restructure of the Ambassador and Neighbors Care Alliance (NCA) programs under a single Coordinator has created a synergistic effect in both programs. Gladys Miller, in her dual role as both NCA and Ambassador Coordinator, and full time NCA Coordinator Bridget Roads have enthusiastically set about reconnecting the missions of the two programs to enhance and complement each other.

Neighbors Care programs, also known as Neighbors Helping Neighbors, help older adults remain in their own homes for as long as possible by providing volunteer services that are natural for neighbors to do for each other (such as transportation and friendly visits). Each program may also identify and design services for needs specific to their communities (such as caregiver relief, refugee integration, grief support, safety checks, and exercise programs).

Last year 1,338 Neighbors Care volunteers provided 106,768 direct services to 2,127 older adults. Volunteers reported 67,867 hours, to meet the equivalent of 1.3 million dollars in labor. Transportation and errands were the most requested services: 1,045 volunteers drove over 444,600 miles. In addition to direct services, the programs serve as pivot points for attracting resources into their communities and provide valuable feedback regarding aging in place to agencies and government bodies.

Pima Council on Aging's (PCOA) volunteer Ambassadors connect older adults and their caregivers to resource, educational, and service information. Many Ambassadors serve not only as information specialists, but also as true Community Connectors within their neighborhood and faith based communities.

These two grassroots efforts are now working hand in hand, with the twin goals of: (a) placing Community Connectors within the 140 neighborhoods, businesses and faith communities associated with the 20 Neighbors Care programs and (b) supporting the Ambassadors/Connectors as they spread the word about resources to older adults, develop relationships within their circles of influence, and introduce community leaders to the Neighbors Care concept.

For communities that wish to connect their elder residents with resources and/or provide neighborly services to help them age in place, PCOA provides training and ongoing support to the Ambassadors, free consultation to communities that wish to start a Neighbors Care program, and continued support to established programs. For more information, contact an NCA Coordinator at Pima Council on Aging at (520) 790-0504 in Tucson, or via email to gmliller@pcoa.org and roads@pcoa.org.

2014 Ages' n Stages Active Adult Lifestyle Expo

Submitted by Debbie Conover, Development Coordinator, Pima Council on Aging

The PCOA 2014 Ages 'n Stages Active Adult Lifestyle Expo, will be **Saturday, March 8, 2014 9am to 4pm**. This FREE event is a celebration of the quality of active living only available in Pima County. It will be an entertaining event for all ages, showcasing the best our community has to offer.

There will be more than 100 exhibitors, a wide range of fun things to do, live musical entertainment, and informative seminars. The day-long Expo will be held at the **Casino Del Sol Grand Ballroom, 5655 W. Valencia Road, Tucson, AZ 85757**. For more information call 800-639-8783, or visit www.casinodelsol.com. Parking is free.

PCOA Ages 'n Stages Expo proceeds will benefit Pima Council on Aging, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), providing information, assistance, advocacy, and nutritional and social services for older adults and their families, who reside in Pima County. For further information contact Debbie at 520-305-3401, dconover@pcoa.org

New Case Managers in Flagstaff



NACOG would like to welcome Cheryl Thomas and Celia La Fave. Cheryl and Celia are Case Managers in the Flagstaff office.

The 22nd Annual Elder Issues Conference a Complete Success

Submitted by Jenny Ellringer, Administrative Assistant, Area Agency on Aging-NACOG

The 22nd Annual Elder Issues Conference Creating Caring Communities: Positive Choices, Positive Changes was held on October 10, 2013, at the High Country Conference Center in Flagstaff, Arizona. Over 170 attendees braved the season's first snowfall to learn from speakers from Washington, D.C., Connecticut, Oregon, as well as Northern Arizona.

The keynote presentation "A Reflection on Aging in Uncertain Times: A National Perspective on Recent Aging Policy Challenges and Opportunities", presented by Fay Gordon of the National Senior Citizens Law Center, was especially engaging in light of recent sequestration cuts and government shutdown. The audience was hungry for information and participated with a flurry of questions.

Breakout sessions included "Cultural Awareness for American Indians in Arizona", "Reaching Within: A Professionals Journey into the World of Ethics and Values", "Elder Abuse- Beyond the Basics" and "Cognitive Fitness Programs for Individuals with Alzheimer's and Dementia". This year also provided a unique track called "Caring for Ourselves as We Care for Others". This uniquely designed track demonstrated a holistic approach to self-care. Sessions included Chair Yoga, Tai Chi, Emotional Freedom Technique and free 10 minute chair massages. Attendees of the conference participated in each activity and experienced first-hand the benefits of relaxation and physical activity as tools to manage our health.

Updates from the Social Security Administration

Submitted by Kari Sanderfer, Public Affairs Specialist, SSA

Kari Sanderfer has offered to provide regular updates from the Social Security Administration (SSA). We appreciate this contribution as this information directly impacts the populations we serve. So continue to look for updates and answers from the SSA for 2014. Don't forget to visit the SSA website at www.socialsecurity.gov for information and answers on all social security topics.

COST of LIVING ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2014

For 2014, people who receive Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) get to ring it in with a Cost of Living adjustment (COLA). This year, more than 60 million Americans are receiving a 1.5 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) in their monthly benefit payment. The estimated average monthly Social Security payment to a retired worker is \$1,294 (in 2014), up from \$1,275 (in 2013). The average monthly Social Security disability payment for an individual is \$1,148 (in 2014), up from \$1,131 (in 2013). The basic monthly federal payment for SSI is \$721 (in 2014), up from \$710 (in 2013). Visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola to learn more about the COLA and other changes in 2014.

TAXES

Are Social Security benefits taxable?

Yes, for some people with higher incomes. About one third of those receiving Social Security benefits must pay taxes on some of their Social Security benefits, depending on the amount of their taxable income. Learn more at www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/taxes.htm.

Will I get a tax form for my Social Security benefits?

Yes. Beneficiaries should receive their Social Security Benefit Statements (Form SSA-1099) for tax year 2013 on or before January 31, 2014. If you receive Social Security and don't receive your 1099 by the end of January, you can request one online at www.socialsecurity.gov/1099.

Does Social Security have any tips at this time of year for those filing their taxes?

Yes. We encourage you to carefully check: your name, Social Security number, and all data on your W-2s; your online Social Security Statement; and your Social Security card to make sure they all match. If you don't have access to your card or Statement but know your Social Security number, make sure the number and information is correct on your W-2s. A mismatch could delay your tax refund and cause problems with your Social Security benefits in the future. If you do notice an error, contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), or if the information on the W-2 is incorrect, notify your employer.

DISABILITY

How does Social Security decide whether I am disabled?

For an adult, disability under Social Security law is based on your inability to work because of a disabling condition. To be considered disabled, Social Security must determine that because of one or more disabling conditions you are unable to do the work you did before and unable to adjust to any other work which exists in significant numbers in the national economy. Also, your disability must last or be expected to last for at least one year or to result in death. Social Security pays only for total disability. No benefits are payable for partial disability or short-term disability (less than a year). For more information, we recommend you read Disability Benefits, available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10029.pdf.

Free Guides Available To Help Financial Caregivers

Submitted by Jennifer Ramirez, Legal Services Developer DAAS

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Office for Older Americans released four easy-to-understand booklets to help financial caregivers. The *Managing Someone Else's Money* guides are for agents under powers of attorney, court-appointed guardians, trustees, and government benefit fiduciaries (Social Security representative payees and VA fiduciaries).

The guides help people acting as fiduciaries in three ways:

- They walk them through their duties.
- They tell them how to watch out for scams and financial exploitation, and what to do if their loved one is a victim.
- They tell them where to go for help.

Download free guides at the CFPB website www.consumerfinance.gov/managing-someone-elses-money.

In addition, there will be Arizona specific guides available in the coming months. For more information on Arizona specific guides please contact Jennifer Ramirez JenniferRamirez@azdes.gov



We are proud to announce the re-launching of the **Arizona Caregiver Coalition** web site. Please visit us at AZCaregiver.org and help us support caregivers in Arizona. The website provides access to information about support and resources for caregivers, and offers new ideas and helpful options for the family caregiver and their loved ones, including information about the new [Arizona Respite Registry](#). You will also find training opportunities, news, blogs, and ways you can get involved.

Don't forget you can always call the statewide toll free **Caregiver Resource Line** if you prefer to speak with a trained volunteer. The statewide toll-free number is **1-888-737-7494**. Hours of operation for the resource line are Monday – Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Messages left after hours will be returned within 24 hours.

Free Tax-Prep Assistance in January

Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/Director of Advocacy Programs, WIPA and BOND Project Director, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living

Low-to-moderate income Arizonans, the elderly and persons with disabilities who qualify for Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) are being advised to wait until January or early February to receive free tax preparation assistance by certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and AARP tax-aide preparers. A 24-hour information hotline will be active in early January to learn about free tax preparation locations. The hotline can be reached by dialing 211 or toll-free at 1-877-211-8661. Information is also available at www.211arizona.org. Qualifying individuals and men and women filing income taxes jointly can have income tax forms prepared at no cost by trained and certified VITA and AARP preparers.

Benefits Work

a r i z o n a

WIPA is Back! Work is the Key to Financial Empowerment!

Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/Director of Advocacy Programs, WIPA and BOND Project Director, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living

Good news! The Social Security Administration (SSA) has received clarification and is now able to continue cooperative agreements across the country for community organizations to provide Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) for Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities.

More good news! ABIL has received a cooperative agreement from SSA to fund free WIPA services statewide to Arizona beneficiaries on SSI and SSDI. We already have Certified Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) in the Phoenix Metro area and Tucson and soon will have another in Northern Arizona.

If you have a specific work goal, are working or have a job offer, we can help you understand how earned income will affect your cash, medical and other benefits. We can inform you about work incentives that can ease your transition to work and help you understand and navigate Social Security related work rules. Our CWICs have knowledge of Social Security, Medicare, AHCCCS and other government programs.

- We believe that people living with disabilities often can and want to work.
- We believe people with disabilities have skills, knowledge and talent to benefit an employer.
- We believe that working can improve a person's quality of life.
- We recognize that each person's circumstances are unique and that the journey from benefits to employment can be scary and complex.
- We know many people with disabilities on Social Security benefits are often living in poverty and...
- We know that there are work incentives and community resources available to help people transition from benefits to employment and financial self-sufficiency!
- Check out our website at www.benefits2work.org.

Working or job offer pending? Contact us at 602-443-0720 or Toll Free at 866-304 WORK.

No job or offer yet and wanting to learn more about SSA work incentives? Go to the Choose Work (www.choosework.net) or Arizona Disability Benefits 101 (www.az.db101.org).

U.S. SENATE AGING COMMITTEE LAUNCHES NEW ANIT-FRAUD HOTLINE

Submitted by Jennifer Ramirez, Legal Services Developer
DAAS

A new anti-fraud hotline has been created by the Senate Aging Committee to make it easier for senior citizens to report suspected fraud and receive assistance. The hotline is staffed by a team of trained committee investigators weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

The investigators, who have experience with investment scams, identity theft, bogus sweepstakes and lottery schemes, Medicare and Social Security fraud, and a variety of other senior exploitation issues, will directly examine complaints and, if appropriate, refer them to the proper authorities.

Anyone with information about suspected fraud can call the toll-free fraud hotline at **1-855-303-9470**, or visit www.aging.senate.gov/fraud-hotline.

The Senate Aging Committee has also launched an enhanced senior-friendly website. The site's new features include large print, simple navigation and an uncluttered layout that enables seniors to find information more easily and conveniently. Online visitors can also increase text size, change colors or view a text-only version of the site. To view the new website, visit www.aging.senate.gov.

Living Well With a Disability Workshop at New Horizons in March 2014

Submitted by Jean Lasher, Community Information
Coordinator/Outreach, New Horizons

Free eight week workshop for adults at New Horizons, a fragrance-free, accessible facility. Workbooks are provided. Class size limited to 10. To sign up, call Deborah at 772-1266 Ext. 301. Participants report improvement in outlook, positive changes in daily activity and pursuing goals. Prescott Noon Lions Foundation provided a portion of funding for this. Support Lions Club, paper recycling put newspapers, magazines, phone books in their collection bins (www.prescottnoonlions.org).

Newsletter Submissions

Dear AZ Link Partners,

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

We are especially interested in hearing about regional partners and the work they do. Please send any news or updates, special projects, activities, calendar pages, any photos or brief notices that you may want to include in the newsletter to Tammy at: Tpankey@azdes.gov.

Next newsletter: March 2014

Deadline for submissions: March 12, 2014

I look forward to hearing from you all!