

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF MISSOULA AGING SERVICES

2023 CONNECTIONS

WINTER

Looking Ahead With Confidence



I have been surprised by the approach of my second winter here in Missoula and at MAS. The days have been full and eventful, but they have passed with lightning speed. I remember my first week on the job, when almost everything and everyone was new. I was eager for the adventure, but despite the very warmest and kindest of welcomes, I also felt a bit lost, with roots waiting to be replanted.

Today, friendly faces have become fast friends, and I no longer use GPS to get around town. I feel proud to be a Missoulian, to live in this beautiful place where equity and inclusion are lived values. Most of all, I am grateful and humbled to be part of Missoula Aging Services, where excellence in service to others drives everything we do.

I am well and truly home.

As we head into the new year together as family, friends, and neighbors, I am excited and hopeful for what we can accomplish. These past few months, we have been on a listening tour, learning from you what our shared home would look like if we could age with confidence and without fear, and if we could fully embrace and express our hard-earned wisdom for the benefit of all.

We are deeply appreciative of your willingness to share your knowledge and insights with us, and especially of your candor and authenticity. Now it's time to take what you've taught us and translate it into action. We look forward to sharing our new Strategic Plan in the spring, and to working with you to make change happen.

Our journey together continues, and I can't wait to see where it leads us! Thank you for your ongoing support, and for your trust in MAS. Your generosity and your partnership are the cornerstone of our success in ensuring we can all lead fulfilling lives as we age.

With heartfelt gratitude and warmest wishes for a joyful holiday season and New Year,

Lisa Sheppard
Chief Executive Officer



Here for You.

- Aging in Place
- Caregiver Support
- Education
- Information & Assistance
- Nutrition & Meals on Wheels
- Safety & Advocacy
- Veterans Programs
- Volunteer Opportunities

WE'RE PROUD *of* OUR YEARS

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funded in part through the Montana Dept.
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Administration for Community Living, City
of Missoula and Missoula County and donors
like you.

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In Perspective



Having a family member with Alzheimer's is not an easy journey. Each person's challenges are different, but the support from our community makes it easier to navigate.

My husband, Paul, and I relocated to Missoula just over a year ago due to Paul's health issues: Multiple Myeloma cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

At Paul's first chemo treatment, a social worker introduced me to Missoula Aging Services. I contacted Missoula Aging Services and found out about the monthly Dementia Caregiver Support Group.

The social and emotional support I received from this group has been invaluable. It seems like whenever one of us needs extra support, another one of us can step in and be that support. I look forward to these sessions every month and know I'll attend them indefinitely.

Through that group, I learned about MAS's "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" Program. This program focused on us caregivers. They did an assessment of our individual needs, taught all of us how to take care of ourselves, manage tough caregiving decisions, and communicate with the loved ones we supported.

When I needed to step away for my own appointments or just take a break, MAS connected me with someone to provide respite care.

Missoula Aging Services allowed me to better handle my husband's care, which helped Paul stay in our home for as long as possible.

Unfortunately, Paul's Alzheimer's progressed very quickly last winter. Due to safety issues, Paul became a resident of Edgewood Vista Memory Care. Paul thrived socially at Edgewood and always had a smile.

I cannot tell you what a wonderful feeling it was when I went from being Paul's caregiver to being his wife again.

Paul passed away on July 3rd of this year.

During one of my Dementia Caregiver Support Group sessions, the word "patience" was emphasized. Dealing with a family member with dementia is beyond stressful, but the classes and support groups I attended at Missoula Aging Services allowed me to use my patience and enjoy my husband's final year to its fullest.

Peggy Seidel

Peggy Seidel

A Missoula Family Caregiver

MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION

Be aware, be prepared, and protect yourself

Have you received a call from someone telling you that you owe a medical debt you've never heard of before, or from someone claiming to be from Medicare saying they're sending new plastic cards and need to confirm your information? Have you received an unsolicited call telling you you're eligible for a back brace or genetic test kit, or some other Medicare covered supplies? **All of these are scams.**

Government imposter scams and identity theft are the top two categories of fraud across the country. According to the Federal Trade Commission, younger people report losing money to fraud more often, but the median loss is much higher for older people.

There are some easily identifiable red flags for every scam, and it's important to familiarize yourself with them. Remember that scammers want to get you into a heightened emotional state because that's when you are more likely to fall victim to their scams.

First and foremost though, know that a legitimate organization will **never** try to scare you or make demands.

For your awareness

- Medicare will not call you uninvited and ask you for personal or private information.
- You will usually get a written statement in the mail before you get a phone call from a government agency.
- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers.
- If you answer and the caller isn't who you expected, hang up immediately.
- Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother's maiden names, passwords or any other self-identifying response to an unexpected call.
- Use caution if you are being pressured for information immediately.
- If a caller claims to represent a health insurance provider or a government agency, simply hang up. You can then call back using a phone number on an account statement, in the phone book, or on an official website to verify the caller's authenticity.
- Calls requesting health insurance information should not be trusted.

If someone asks you for your information, for money, or threatens to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your personal details, hang up and call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or visit [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).

If you have concerns about healthcare scams call MT Senior Medicare Patrol at 406-728-7682.

MAJOR DONORS

August - October 2023

Individuals and Businesses who made gifts of \$200 or more:

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August - October 2023

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August - October 2023

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August - October 2023

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A Season of Compassion & Giving

Preparing for the holidays can mean a variety of things to different people. Some enjoy hanging lights and decorations, while others begin planning meals with family and friends. But for many older adults in Missoula County, the holidays can bring loneliness and isolation, especially as weather begins to impact the ability to safely travel.

At Missoula Aging Services (MAS), we recognize each person's needs are unique. The programs and resources we offer provide personalized support to local older adults and caregivers. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, MAS is funded in a variety of ways; from local business support and foundations to donations from generous individuals like you.

As you begin your holiday planning this year, we ask you to remember your older adult neighbors too, by making a tax-deductible donation to MAS. Donations can be made in any amount and can be designated to the program of your choosing. Scan the QR code to make an online gift, or donate by mailing the enclosed envelope to MAS.

Thank you for your support and happy holidays!

-Allison Strekal, Development Director



A HELPING HAND

MAS CLIENT SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

In a fast-paced world, we often overlook the unsung heroes providing essential care to our aging neighbors. Missoula Aging Services' Client Support Specialists ensure that older adults in our community can age with dignity at home. With the holiday season approaching, it's the perfect time to express our heartfelt gratitude for their invaluable contributions.

The five Client Support Specialists, operating within MAS's Care Management and In Home Support Services Programs, have supported over 75 clients this past year. From nutritious meal preparation and accompanying clients to medical appointments to providing companionship and hands-on care, they enhance quality of life for local older adults. Their dedication enables their clients to age in the comfort of their own homes.

Their support goes beyond physical care. Client Support Specialists forge meaningful relationships with their clients, offering a friendly ear and warm smile. In a time when loneliness and isolation affect many older adults, they provide a lifeline, especially for those with distant family members. These regular check-ins ensure safety and comfort.

Notably, these services are offered on a sliding fee scale based on income, making them accessible to those who might otherwise forgo care due to the high costs of in-home care. Without the support of many generous donors and grant funders, MAS would not be able to offer such services, so we also extend our sincere gratitude to those individuals and entities.

"I enjoy forming meaningful relationships with my clients and their families. I get to meet their pets, listen to family stories, learn about their hobbies, and share in many other precious moments. I'm grateful for the opportunity to enrich my clients' lives."

-Kelli Atkins, Client Support Specialist

SAVE THE DATE!

*Our jewelry sale returns on June 8.
Donations wanted!*

We're accepting donations of your costume and fine jewelry for our WEAR IT AGAIN Jewelry Sale. All proceeds will benefit programs and services at Missoula Aging Services. Bring your donations to our office at 337 Stephens Ave., or call us at 728-7682 and we will be happy to pick them up. *Watch our website for more information!*



New Location! Missoula County Fairgrounds - Home Arts Building

Staff News at MAS

Our team at Missoula Aging Services continues to grow so we can provide the best service possible. This past season, the Agency welcomed three new staff members dedicated to serving older adults in our community.

MICHELLE CURA joined Missoula Aging Services as the Home Modification Coordinator in October. Michelle holds a bachelor's degree in communications from Florida International University and spent most of her career working in production and film before discovering her passion for carpentry and furniture making. Michelle now enjoys utilizing these skills to help make the homes of older adults a safer place to live.

MATT DREW came to Missoula Aging Services in November as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator to lead the development and implementation of a robust, organization-wide communications and marketing strategy. A Washington State native, Matt's marketing and communications career has taken him around the country. Matt is excited about his role with MAS because it provides an opportunity to apply his marketing acumen to an organization deeply focused on serving.

LUCIAN NEWMAN was welcomed to Missoula Aging Services in December as a Resource Specialist. Lucian discovered his passion for working with older adults in 2021 and has enjoyed this line of work ever since. Before joining MAS, Lucian worked at senior living residences in a variety of roles and is pleased to apply skills he's learned over the years to connect older adults with resources and services in our community.

Share the Love

For 16 years, Subaru retailers have helped support the delivery of thousands of meals and friendly visits to our homebound neighbors served by Meals on Wheels with more than \$50,000 in donations to MAS since the program first launched.

From November 16 through January 2, 2024, Subaru retailers are donating \$250 for every new vehicle purchased or leased to the customer's choice of participating charities, including Meals on Wheels. Missoula Aging Services is proud to partner with Subaru once again this year. When you visit Subaru of Missoula, please thank them for their support!



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MISSOULA *aging* SERVICES

WE'RE PROUD *of* OUR YEARS

337 Stephens Ave | Missoula, MT

MISSOULAAGINGSERVICES.ORG

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MAS Events

VIRTUAL NEW TO MEDICARE WORKSHOP

Tuesday, January 9 from 6-7:30 pm

Or Tuesday, March 5 from 6-7:30 pm

Register online: virtualnewtomedicaremas.eventbrite.com

IN-PERSON NEW TO MEDICARE WORKSHOP

Wednesday, February 7 from 12-1:30 pm

Missoula Aging Services Offices

337 Stephens Ave, Missoula, MT 59801

Register online: <https://medicaremas.eventbrite.com>

VIRTUAL MEMORY LOSS CONVERSATIONS

Thursdays from 10-11 am. New attendees welcome!

Participate online using Zoom. No cost. Facilitated by
Dementia Friendly Missoula.

Register online: <https://bit.ly/3ITnAsY>

VIRTUAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Participate online using Zoom. No cost.

Third Tuesday of each month from 1-2 pm

Register online: <https://bit.ly/2YkyVPU>

IN-PERSON CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Participate in person at Missoula Aging Services. No cost.

Fourth Thursday of each month from 2-3 pm

Check-in at the front desk when you arrive.

VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN (MT KINSHIP NAVIGATOR)

Third Wednesday of each month from 12:30-1:30 pm

Participate online using Zoom. No cost.

Register online: <https://bit.ly/3fb2EjU>

View a full list of events at

MISSOULAAGINGSERVICES.ORG