



VILAS VIEW

December Newsletter
2021

Aging & Disability Resource Center of Vilas County

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OFFICE HOURS: M - F
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

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Volunteers Wanted

EMBRACE THREE FRENCH HENS

When most people think of the three French hens, they think of the whimsical English Christmas carol that repeats itself in your head all season long. But, these silly sounding gifts and lyrics represent a greater meaning of what Christmas is all about. The song dates back to 1780, and has been practiced and appreciated in many different countries and cultures. This December, let's all do our best to practice and embrace the "Three French Hens." No, I am not talking about hugging your favorite Faverolle or other feathered flock member, I am referring to the greatest virtues in life of FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY. Charity, also known as love, being the greatest gift of them all. These three essential life ingredients are a beautiful concept during the holiday season.

Even though most of us have happy celebratory memories of when we were young, this time of year can be stressful for others. The winter holidays can be a sad or lonely time for older adults. Social isolation and loneliness should not be taken lightly. Holidays can indeed be painful and triggering for individuals, families, and communities. The shorter days with less sunlight can also bring on winter blues. Here are some helpful tips to navigate the holiday season.

- Be kind to yourself! Practice mindfulness: take time to do things that will enhance your self-esteem and naturally boost your spirit.
- Surround yourself with supportive and caring people. Teach your loved ones the meaning of family traditions.
- Connect: Participate in classes, senior centers, churches, or other social activities. Embrace the camaraderie of your community.
- Volunteer: For those in need, volunteering your time or donating to a local charity, practices hope and faith, and fills your heart with love. This act of altruism increases personal happiness and propels a sense of purpose.
- Music: Celebrate in the most simplest and enjoyable for you.
- Decrease the focus on materialism and consumerism: Give and ask for only the most valuable items: love, time, and being present.

Charity, or the joy of gift giving has been found to have biological benefits in the brain. Not only is it a way to show interest, appreciation, and gratitude, but it also gives you an emotional reward in return. The unselfish concern for the well-being of others reinforces relationships. Seeing the positive look on the recipient's face provides a psychological lift to the giver and triggers the pleasure endorphins in the brain. The same reactions of pleasure and joy that you experience when falling in love, eating something extremely delectable, or conquering a tough workout. For this season, we wish you all faith, hope, and love, or three French hens for your holiday.



Letter from the Director

DECEMBER

It's the most wonderful time of the year! This month is a special time to show others you care. Many anticipate the arrival of December all year long for everything this beautiful month entails. Love, quality time with family and friends, little surprises, and a magic dust making everyone realize what is important in life.

I personally love all the lights, from the fireplace, the houses, the street, the entire town is lit up and sharing joy during this month. I also spend the entire month watching Christmas themed movies that bring back childhood memories. I love the turkey dinner, pies, and all the variety of Christmas cookies.

Christmas time reminds us of what is most important in life, teaches us to believe in what we cannot see, and sends a note of optimum, joy, and kindness in our hearts.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!
Susan L. Richmond, Director



Vilas Wacky Winter Trivia

1. The weasel and ermine are the same animal. The only difference is the brown coat of the weasel turns white in the winter when it is known as an ermine.
2. Human hair grows slower in the summer than in the winter.
3. During a Nor'easter, it is possible for snow to fall for 24 continuous hours.
4. In 1816 during June and July, Connecticut experienced a blizzard.
5. Helena, MT has the coldest average winter temperature for a U.S. city.
6. Ten inches of snow is equivalent to one inch of rain.
7. The temperature of snow clouds must be 32° F or colder for snow to form.
8. The record for highest average snowfall is 440 inches.
9. Sound travels best when the snow's surface becomes smooth and hard from time or strong winds.
10. Fresh snow is 75% air.

BE PREPARED



full tank of gas



ice scraper/snow brush



sand/shovel



jumper cables



flashlight



first aid kit

don't forget your medications



cellphone charger



boots, gloves
blankets, warm clothes



water/snacks

Because you never know when you will encounter winter weather or emergency road closures

FOR WINTER DRIVING

- **Safety First** – Avoid driving when roads are treacherous!
- **Clear it Before You Go**
– Remove ice and snow from windows, lights and mirrors
- **Go Slow in Ice and Snow**
– Relax and take it easy
- **Stay Focused**
– Distractions can wait
- **You Cruise, You Lose**
– Avoid cruise control in winter conditions
- **Keep Your Distance**
– Stay 200 feet behind snowplows
– Stop safely



Call 511 or visit 511wi.gov
for real-time traveler information,
including winter road conditions



DRIVE SAFELY

Aging & Disability Resource Center Programs & Services Offered

Transportation: Rides are provided by volunteers for Vilas County residents. Persons aged 60+ and those living with a disability are eligible for rides on a donation basis. General public passengers (aged <60/not disabled) are required to pay the total cost of the trip prior to transporting.

Elderly Nutrition Program: Provides seniors 60 years and older with low-cost, nutritious meals. Carry-out meals available at meal sites, and home delivered meals offered throughout the county for qualifying homebound seniors. Congregate dining open at Land O'Lakes, Eagle River, Phelps, and Boulder Junction meal sites only.

Family Caregiver Support Group: Help find support from other caregivers on issues, concerns, and the joy of caregiving!

Evidence-Based Health Promotion Classes: A variety of classes offered to help seniors improve their quality of life through home safety, fall prevention, medication management, and skills to live with chronic health conditions.

Caregiver Support Programs: Provide information and/or funding to caregivers of family members living in Vilas County.

Information and Assistance: Specialists provide you with knowledge about services, programs, and solutions for disability and long-term care issues, memory screens, public assistance, family care enrollment, assistive devices, etc.

Benefits Counseling: Elder benefit and disability benefit specialists provide accurate and current information about private and government benefits programs, assisting with Medicare, Social Security, and other benefits.

Chore Services: Provides assistance to older adults who need help with shopping, laundry, and light housekeeping.

Kindness Calls: A communication outreach program designed to help reduce isolation and loneliness for those who are homebound. Calls provide companionship and keep individuals socially connected.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE PROGRAMS, CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT (715) 479-3625



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Cold Weather Safety for Older Adults

If you are like most people, you feel cold every now and then during the winter. What you may not know is that just being really cold can make you very sick. Older adults can lose body heat fast—faster than when they were young. Changes in your body that come with aging can make it harder for you to be aware of getting cold. A big chill can turn into a dangerous problem before an older person even knows what's happening. Doctors call this serious problem **hypothermia**.

What Is Hypothermia?

Hypothermia is what happens when your body temperature gets very low. For an older person, a body temperature of 95°F or lower can cause many health problems, such as a heart attack, kidney problems, liver damage, or worse. Being outside in the cold, or even being in a very cold house, can lead to hypothermia. Try to stay away from cold places, and pay attention to how cold it is where you are. You can take steps to lower your chance of getting hypothermia.

EARLY SIGNS OF HYPOTHERMIA:

- Cold feet and hands
- Puffy or swollen face
- Pale skin
- Shivering (in some cases the person with hypothermia does not shiver)
- Slower than normal speech or slurring words
- Acting sleepy
- Being angry or confused

LATER SIGNS OF HYPOTHERMIA:

- Moving slowly, trouble walking, or being clumsy
- Stiff and jerky arm or leg movements
- Slow heartbeat
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Blacking out or losing consciousness

Keep Warm Inside

Living in a cold house, apartment, or other building can cause hypothermia. In fact, hypothermia can happen to someone in a nursing home or group facility if the rooms are not kept warm enough. If someone you know is in a group facility, pay attention to the inside temperature and to whether that person is dressed warmly enough. People who are sick may have special problems keeping warm. Do not let it get too cold inside and dress warmly. Even if you keep your temperatures are 60°F-65°F, your home or apartment may not be warm enough to keep you safe. This is a special problem if you live alone because there is no one else to feel the chilliness of the house or notice if you are having symptoms of hypothermia.



Tips To Keeping Warm Indoors:

- Set your heat to at least 68–70°F. To save on heating bills, close off rooms you are not using. Close the vents and shut the doors in these rooms, and keep the basement door closed. Place a rolled towel in front of all doors to keep out drafts.
- Make sure your house isn't losing heat through windows. Keep your blinds and curtains closed. If you have gaps around the windows, try using weather stripping or caulk to keep the cold air out.
- Dress warmly on cold days even if you are staying in the house. Throw a blanket over your legs, wear socks and slippers.
- When you go to sleep, wear long underwear under your pajamas, and use extra covers. Wear a cap or hat.
- Make sure you eat enough food to keep up your weight. If you don't eat well, you might have less fat under your skin. Body fat helps you to stay warm.
- Drink alcohol moderately, if at all. Alcoholic drinks can make you lose body heat.
- Ask family or friends to check on you during cold weather. If a power outage leaves you without heat, try to stay with a relative or friend.

Bundle Up on Windy, Cold Days

A heavy wind can quickly lower your body temperature. Check the weather forecast for windy and cold days. On those days, try to stay inside or in a warm place. If you have to go out, wear warm clothes, and don't stay out in the cold and wind for a long time. Dress for the weather if you have to go out; wear loose layers of clothing as the air between the layers keeps you warm. Wear a hat and scarf, you lose a lot of body heat out of your head and neck. Wear a waterproof coat if it is snowy, and change out of wet clothes immediately.

Call 911 right away, if you think someone has warning signs of hypothermia!

Article adapted from

www.nia.nih.gov/health/cold-weather-safety-older-adults

Social Security Benefits to Increase 5.9% for 2022

Largest Increase in 40 Years

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

The Social Security Administration (SSA) recently announced that the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2022 would be 5.9%, the largest increase since 1982. The average recipient will see a \$92 monthly increase from 2021. However, 2022 Medicare premiums are also expected to increase, reducing the impact of this COLA increase. Medicare premiums amounts for 2022 are expected to be released in November.

With the COLA for 2022, the average monthly Social Security benefit will increase from \$1,565 to \$1,657, and for individuals collecting Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), the average monthly benefit will increase from \$1,282 to \$1,358.

Additional Social Security Changes for 2022

- Maximum earnings subject to the Social Security tax will increase from \$142,800 to \$147,000.
- Maximum Social Security earnings before someone will see an early retirement work penalty will increase to \$19,560 per year or \$1,630 per month, unless the beneficiary reaches full retirement age (FRA) in that year, then the limit will increase to \$51,960 per year or \$4,330 per month.
- In 2022 it will take \$1,510 to earn a Social Security quarter, up \$40 from 2021.



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Reducing Holiday Stress

Jane Mahoney, Older Americans Act Consultant GWAAR

It's time for the holidays once again: decorating, shopping, parties, family gatherings, presents, greeting cards...the list goes on and on. While many people look forward to the hustle and bustle of the season, others see the holidays as a time of stress, chaos, and sadness.

People who have experienced changes due to Alzheimer's, stroke, or other medical conditions may feel a great deal of loss during the holidays. Those who are caring for these loved ones may feel overwhelmed by trying to keep up holiday traditions while continuing to provide care. They may also be uncertain about gathering with friends and family for fear the changes in physical health, behavior, and personality may make others uncomfortable.

If you are experiencing anxiety over the upcoming holiday season, it is important to realize that these feelings are normal, and you are not alone. There are ways to reduce stress during the holiday season. Please take a moment to contemplate what you can do to better manage your life during this busy season.

ADJUST YOUR EXPECTATIONS. You don't have to do everything you've done in the past. Talk with your loved ones and choose a few traditions to carry out.

ASK FOR HELP. Involve other family members or friends in your holiday preparations. Not only does this reduce your stress, but it provides you and your loved one with socialization. Write down what needs to be done so you can ask for something specific when people offer to help.

PREPARE FAMILY AND FRIENDS BEFORE GETTING

TOGETHER. Update family and friends on how your loved one has changed and what they can expect during their visit. Offer suggestions on how best to communicate.

SUGGEST GIFT IDEAS. Give friends and family ideas of useful gifts they can give such as cd's, photo albums, comfortable clothing, videos or audio books. Don't forget your own wish list, too! Gift certificates for dining, laundry or cleaning services are great ideas for busy caregivers.

KEEP THE NEEDS OF YOUR LOVED ONE IN MIND. For those with memory loss, remember that distant memory stays intact the longest and plan activities accordingly, avoiding new games or activities. Many stroke survivors have lost the ability to feed themselves and may find it uncomfortable to eat in front of guests. An afternoon of looking at old slides or photos and reminiscing might be more appropriate than sharing a meal. Schedule gatherings during the day rather than in the evening since symptoms often are worse in the evening.

BE GOOD TO YOURSELF. Make it a priority to care for yourself. Getting away with friends for lunch, a movie or a concert might be just what you need. Or perhaps some time by yourself to read, write in a journal or enjoy a bubble bath is how you recharge. Determine what rejuvenates you and take the time to do it.

Don't let the hustle and bustle of the holidays add anxiety to your life! Find ways to simplify and enjoy a stress-free holiday season filled with love, joy and good memories! For more information about caregiving and resources that can help, contact the ADRC of Vilas County at 715-479-3625.

Happy Holidays!

IS THERE HELP FOR MY HEATING BILLS?

WISCONSIN HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-WHEAP

Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) provides assistance for heating, electric, and energy crisis situations. WHEAP is a one-time payment each heating season (October 1 to May 15). It is intended to help pay a portion of heating costs, not the total annual heating cost. The amount of the heating assistance benefit varies according to household size, income level, and household heating costs. WHEAP payments are sent directly to the fuel supplier.

Public Benefits (electric) Assistance is available to households that qualify, for a one-time payment per heating season, for electric costs. Electric payments will be sent directly to your electric provider.

Crisis Assistance is available the entire heating season from October 1st to September 30th, subject to the availability of crisis funds, on a first come first serve basis.

Emergency Crisis Assistance is for households without heat or nearly out of heating fuel and no way to pay for heating needs.

Proactive Crisis Assistance is for households that have been disconnected, have received a disconnection notice, or have a large balance due that they need help catching up on.

Furnace repair or replacement is available for qualifying households who own their homes and a small number of rental units. These services are subject to funds available through the Weatherization Agency. Households should contact **Energy Services, Inc.** prior to having any furnace repair work done.

Weatherization helps homeowners and renters reduce energy use. Depending on the results of a home energy audit, homes may receive one or more of the following energy efficiency measures: insulation, sealing air leaks, heating systems update, and energy saving products.

To Apply for Benefits contact **Energy Services, Inc.** at **715-337-2124** to schedule an interview. To apply for home energy assistance, call **715-337-2124**, to schedule an appointment.

Nutrition News

Vilas County Nutrition Sites are now open for congregate dining, **EXCEPT for St. Germain Senior Cafe**. Carry-out meal service is still available during this time. Home-Delivered Meals are available based upon eligibility. To qualify for Home-Delivered Meals, an assessment must conclude that a person aged 60+ is essentially homebound by reason of illness, disability, or isolation, or a spouse or domestic partner of a person eligible for a HDM as described above, regardless of age or condition, or an adult with a disability who resides with an eligible older individual participating in the program. All meal reservations or cancelations, must be made within 24 hours advance notice. For questions about the meal program, please contact the ADRC of Vilas County at (715) 479-3625.

Eagle River, The Rock Mission Center, More Than A Meal Café:

Monday-Friday at Noon, Jennie Johnson: (715) 891-1221

Phelps, Northern Exposure, Golden Years Café:

Monday-Wednesday & Friday at Noon, Judi Heikkinen: (715) 545-3697

St. Germain, Community Center, St. Germain Senior Café:

Monday, Thursday, & Friday at Noon, Nancy Moser: (715) 617-2795

Land O' Lakes, Gateway Lodge, Love of Life Café:

Tuesday & Wednesday at 11:30 AM, Anna Moore: (715) 547-6076

Boulder Junction, Boulder Beer Bar, The Lunch Bunch:

Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday at 11:30 AM,

Josie Blaisdell-Allen: (715) 385-2617

Volunteer Spotlight

Roberta Retrum

Who is Roberta Retrum? **She is nothing short of a champion!**

Although her desire was to fly like superman, her real PROWESS is surviving Stage 4 Cancer. Her unbeatable spirit and determination set an exceedingly high example for all.

If you are lucky enough to have her as a transport driver or meals delivered by her, be sure to get this pint sized superhero's autograph!

What is the most enjoyable aspect of your position?

Seeing the smiles on the faces of the people I help.

What did you want to be when you grew up? **A doctor.**

Most challenging? **Knowing there are more people out there that I could and want to help.**

Favorite Motto? **"I think I can, I think I can!"**

What is on the top of your bucket list? **Skydiving.**

What would you do with One Million Dollars? **Give most of it away to help others!**



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GIVING

THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS IS THE SPIRIT OF GIVING
WITHOUT A THOUGHT OF GETTING
—THOMAS MONSON

Holiday Friendship Tea Mix

- . 1 1/2 c sugar
- . 1 c sweetened lemonade mix
- . 1 c Tang
- . 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- . 1/2 tsp ground cloves



Mix all ingredients together and store in airtight container. Include the following directions on the gift tag: For each serving, add 3-4 teaspoons mixture to 1 cup hot water, stir well.

Spiced Nuts

- . 1 egg white
- . 1 TBS water
- . 1 lb pecans or walnuts
- . 2/3 c sugar
- . 1 tsp salt
- . 2 tsp cinnamon
- . 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- . 3/4 tsp allspice

Whip egg white and water until foamy. Add nuts. Mix sugar, salt, and spices in a gallon size bag. Add nuts to sugar mixture, and shake bag until nuts are well coated. Spray a non-stick cooking spray on a baking sheet, and pour nuts on it. Bake 250* for 1 hour, stirring every 30 minutes. Turn oven off and stir the nuts. Leave them in the oven overnight to dry out. Store in airtight container. To give away, place 1 cup of nuts in jar or sandwich bag and label with a decorative label.



BAH HUMBUGH!

Did you know according to the Christmas Price Index of the PNC Bank, in 2019, if one were to buy the actual "12 Days of Christmas" worth of gifts, it would've roughly cost someone \$38,993.53 for everything! During the pandemic of 2020, the cost reduced to \$16,168.10; the loss from society closing, isolating, and social distancing.

VILAS TRIVIA ANSWERS 1. T 2. T 3. T 4. T 5. F F (*Barrow, AK holds that record at 4.1° F.*) 6. T 7. T 8. T (*In Stampede Pass, WA*) 9. T 10. F (50%)

Need A Newsletter

The ADRC newsletter, The Vilas View, is published monthly to keep you informed of programs and activities important to older adults, adults with disabilities, and their families. Look to one of these following locations to receive a FREE copy each month.

- Read on-line at www.vilascountywi.gov/departments/services/adrc_of_vilas_county
- Read and/or subscribe on-line at <https://www.mycommunityonline.com/find/adrc-of-vilas-county>
- Send us your email to adrc@vilascountywi.gov
- Pick up a copy from one of our meal site managers during a carry-out meal pickup
- All Home Delivered Meal participants will receive an issue with his or her meal each month
- Pick up a copy from the ADRC office at the Vilas County Courthouse

Do you have a question or topic you would like to learn more about in our newsletter? Send us your comments below and mail back to ADRC of Vilas County, 330 Court Street, Eagle River, WI 54521


