

The  April / May 2020
Messenger

Special Issue





Thanks to Area Supporters

On behalf of all the people of Cass County who benefit from programs and services offered by the Cass County COA, thank you to everyone who has donated and helped support these vital daily services for our local seniors.

Funds donated from the Southwest Michigan Cares Fund, supported by Berrien Community Foundation and United Way of Southwest Michigan, Midwest Energy and Communications and Meals on Wheels of America, has helped support the COA's Meals on Wheels program. We delivered over 2,500 meals within the first two weeks of the Governor's "Stay home. Stay safe. Save lives." Executive Order at little or no cost to our community's seniors.

The Cass County COA is dedicated to providing the best care possible for your aging neighbors, parents, and grandparents. During this difficult time we rely on your generosity to help us continue to reimagine our services. Your donation supports essential services like in-home care, medical transportation and Meals on Wheels, designed for aging adults in our community.

If you know someone who could use these services or would like to donate, please visit our website at CassCOA.org or call (269) 445-8110.



Top: MEC presents donation to COA

Side: Supplies packages sent out with Meals on Wheels

Meals Still Rolling at the COA

As business operations shutter all over the county, the Cass County COA is still working hard at providing essential services for our community's seniors. In accordance with Governor Whitmer's "Stay home. Stay safe. Save lives." Executive Order, both COA facilities will continue to be closed to the public until at least April 30. However, we are continuing to provide nutritionally balanced hot and frozen carry out meals at our Lowe Center location in Cassopolis and Meals on Wheels is delivered daily to residents by friendly staff members as well as a dedicated Deputy from the Cass County Sheriff's Office.



For any senior (60 years and above) in Cass County, the COA has extended our five frozen meals free of charge; including those who have already received free meals in the past 3 weeks. These meals can be delivered to your home or picked up at the COA's Lowe Center in Cassopolis from 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. Please call ahead to reserve your meals.



Outside of the meal programs, the Cass County COA is also continuing to provide Home Care Assistance to existing priority clients and Out of County Medical Transportation for appointments of those identified as high priority, such as dialysis and cancer treatments.

While it may not be "business as usual" at the COA, we are committed to our mission to provide services and programs to assist individuals to age and live well with dignity and independence. COA Care Services staff is still available to help any senior connect to resources they may need.

For more information regarding meal options or services, please visit our website at CassCOA.org or call (269) 445-8110.



Cass County COA truly C.A.R.E.s

During this very unsettling time, our community's older adults are more socially isolated than ever. Cass County COA's C.A.R.E. (Call and Reassure Elders) program aims to provide support to local seniors with pre-arranged check-in calls that help monitor their well-being and provide relief for their caregivers and family members. For many, this may be the only socialization they receive throughout the day. The C.A.R.E. program can help provide peace of mind knowing that your loved ones are getting daily connections from supportive COA staff members while also providing a friendly voice to share a light conversation.

For seniors living alone without regular interaction from family or friends, they are often left feeling lonely and neglected. This service is designed to make them feel secure in knowing they will always have a caring friend they can talk to throughout the week.

Participants enrolled in the program will receive phone calls each weekday at a scheduled time as a daily check-in and provide friendly conversation. Any concerns would be referred to the participant's emergency contact or other local agencies if needed.

If you, a family member, or a friend is interested in the COA's C.A.R.E. program, please call (269) 445-8110. C.A.R.E. is only a phone call away.

Care Throughout the County

As the population of those 60+ increases, the Care Services Team at the Cass County COA is committed to providing programs and services to help seniors stay in their homes. At this time, some of these services have been postponed but all services will begin again as allowed. Please contact the COA if you have any questions regarding these services:

- **Adult Day Service** - Our Adult Day Service (ADS) program can provide caregivers with a needed break while giving older adults a chance to socialize with their peers. This service offers a homelike environment, and in many cases transportation can be arranged to and from our program site at the Lowe Center in Cassopolis. Those in our care engage in a variety of activities that are designed to stimulate cognitive and social capabilities. A nutritious breakfast and lunch are served in an atmosphere geared to person-centered care plans.
- **In-Home Care** - Our dedicated and knowledgeable home health aides help clients to stay in their home while receiving the care that they need. Our aides assist with individualized services for each person and deliver the utmost professional care. Our dedicated aides provide services to older adults and people with disabilities that enhance their lives and foster independence.
- **Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program** - The Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) educates, counsels and empowers older adults and individuals with disabilities, to make informed health benefit decisions. Our highly qualified COA MMAP counselors assist Medicare beneficiaries in making non-bias health & prescription plan decisions while getting the maximum benefit from Medicare.
- **Medical Transport** - Our dedicated transportation volunteers help to transport older adults and individuals with disabilities to and from out-of-county medical appointments.
- **Medical Loan Closet** -The COA has gently used donated medical equipment that can be borrowed free of charge as needed (depending on availability). Items include: wheelchairs, walkers, etc.
- **Handy Helpers** - Volunteers from the COA's Handy Helpers program build wheelchair accessible ramps to provide safe access for seniors to their homes.
- **Support Groups** - The Care Services Department facilitates a number of Support Groups designed to provide encouragement, camaraderie and valuable information for those dealing with, or caring for someone with: Dementia, Diabetes, Grief, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, and Stroke.



Senior Project Fresh

The COA is hosting Senior Project Fresh again this summer. Project Fresh gives Cass County seniors coupons that are used like cash to buy unprocessed Michigan grown fruits and vegetables at registered Farmers Markets and roadside stands throughout the state of Michigan.

To qualify for Senior Project Fresh through the COA you must:

1. Live in Cass County
2. Be at least 60 years of age
3. Meet income qualifications (single: income must be under \$1800, household of 2, must be under \$2500 per month)
4. Only one set of coupons per household

If you meet these qualifications, please call the COA at (269) 445-8110 starting **WEDNESDAY, MAY 27 after 9:30 a.m.** to make an appointment to pick up your Project Fresh coupons. You may only make an appointment for yourself. You cannot make appointments for multiple people. ***Coupons will NOT be available on May 27.*** Distribution will begin shortly thereafter.

Coupons will be distributed both at the Lowe Center and at Front Street Crossing. If you are unable to come yourself and are sending someone to pick them up on your behalf, please give your name and address when you call so we can send out an application and proxy sheet before your pick-up date. By not doing so, you may risk your spot in line.

Coupons are distributed by appointment only and on a first-come, first-served basis. Any missed appointments will not be rescheduled.

Shredding Day at the Lowe Center

Thursday, May 14 • 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Cost: \$5 per car

Bring all documents and papers you no longer need to our outside location. Minimal to no contact.

Provided by Mountain High Shredding

Activities Await Your Return

Active Living and Learning at the COA includes engaging activities along with events and programs designed to enlighten, inspire and educate. Although we are unable to continue these programs and activities at this time, we look forward to hosting all of your favorite pastimes held here at the COA and plan to schedule new and exciting events as soon as we are allowed. Some of our monthly activities include:

Social Activities

- Bingo
- Book Club
- Ceramics
- Dance & Social Club
- Euchre Club
- Fruit Belt Wood Carvers
- Knitting and Crocheting
- Hollywood Treasures
(Monthly Movie)
- Mah Jongg
- Pinochle Club
- Quilting Club
- Sing Along
- Writers Group

Health and Wellness

- Cardio Challenge Fitness Class
- Drug Drop
- Foot Clinic
- Hearing Clinic
- Line Dance
- Massage
- S.E.A.T. Fitness Class
- Tai Chi
- Vim and Vigor Fitness Class
- Yoga
- Zumba Gold

Educational

- Arts and Crafts Classes
- Computer Support
- Cooking Demos/Classes
- Educational/Historical Classes
- Monthly Bus Trips

Senior Safety

The Cass County COA and the Cass County Sheriff's Office have teamed together to create a network of resources to address the safety and security needs of older adults in our community. This joint venture provides community members with swift, easy and comfortable access to all senior safety and security resources.

Just some of the Senior Safety programs and educational presentations offered at the COA by Deputy MaKenzie Kreiner include:

- Community Emergency Response Team Training
- Consumer/Crime Prevention
- CSI for Adults
- Identity Theft Protection
- Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
- Project Lifesaver
- Smart911
- Vulnerable Adult Network

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Permit #43

The Messenger
Cass County Council on Aging
P.O. Box 5
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Walking Trail Open

With temperatures finally getting warmer, it is good to keep in mind that our Walking Trail is still open to the public. The Walking Trail is located at our Lowe Center in Cassopolis on Decatur Road. An outdoor walk is a great way to help stay fit and get some much needed sunshine. As recommended by the CDC, walkers must keep a distance of at least 6 feet apart; please be kind and respectful to others while using the Walking Trail.

