

— The May Issue 2025 —

# The Distinguished Reader

*A newsletter made to inform and support Knox County Seniors.*



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## A Call to Action for Our Elders: Standing Up for Knox County Seniors

*By Michael Bennett, Executive Director*

“In the end, we will be judged by how we treat the most vulnerable among us.”

In every community, there are those who have given much and now ask for very little. They are our veterans, our retired farmers, our widows and caregivers — the quiet backbone of Knox County. And right now, they need your voice.

Across Illinois, local and state governments are facing financial uncertainty. Budgets are tightening. Priorities are shifting. But one thing should never be up for debate: our responsibility to care for our seniors must remain non-negotiable.

At VNA Community Services, we serve hundreds of older adults every month — delivering hot meals, providing health and safety checks, offering transportation, guidance, and connection. For many, we are the only face they see that day. For some, the only call they receive. The work we do doesn't just help — it saves lives. But we cannot do it alone.



***"We're not asking for special treatment — we're asking for basic dignity."***

#### POLICY SPOTLIGHT: What the Disbanding of ACL Means for Our Seniors

In a stunning development with far-reaching implications, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) — the federal agency tasked with overseeing the Older Americans Act (OAA) — has been officially disbanded. This move creates immediate uncertainty for the future of senior services across the country, and especially here in Knox County. The ACL has served as the backbone of federal aging policy, coordinating critical funding streams for:

- Home-delivered and congregate meals
- Family caregiver support
- Elder rights protection
- Health and wellness programs

With the ACL now dissolved, the oversight, accountability, and unified vision behind these essential services are at risk of fragmentation or delay.

As Knox County considers future funding decisions and resource allocation, we urge every resident to speak out. Call or email your local city council member. Reach out to your county board representative. Let them know that supporting seniors isn't a luxury — it's a duty.

#### ✓ What You Can Do Right Now:

- Contact your city or county representative and tell them: "I want to make sure Knox County seniors are always supported — even in times of uncertainty."
- Share your story — if VNA or another local program has helped a loved one in your life, make it known.
- Encourage your neighbors to act. A community that stands together is a community that's heard.

We're not asking for special treatment — we're asking for basic dignity. For compassion. For recognition of a generation that paved the way for everything we enjoy today.

Their needs are modest. Their contributions were great. Let's make sure our community shows up for them.

Because when we take care of our seniors, we affirm the kind of community we are — and the kind we want to become.

Stand up. Speak out. Let's protect Knox County's greatest generation.

For agencies like VNA Community Services — and for the thousands of seniors we support — this could mean serious disruptions in funding, guidance, and program continuity.

Now more than ever, local and state leaders must step up. If the federal government can no longer guarantee consistency, we must ensure that our communities fill the gap.

#### What You Can Do:

- Contact your state and federal legislators and urge them to protect OAA funding during this transition.
- Demand that replacement oversight structures include transparency and experienced aging advocates.
- Stay engaged. Follow updates. Let your voice be heard in support of seniors who cannot afford to be forgotten in a bureaucratic shuffle.

This is not just a policy shift — it's a test of our values.

Let's rise to meet it.



# Dementia Friendly Galesburg Kickoff was Resounding Success

On Friday, May 2nd, over 50 community members gathered at The Kensington Ballroom for the official launch of the Dementia Friendly Galesburg initiative — a night filled with connection, celebration, and a shared commitment to making our community more inclusive for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

The evening was an overwhelming success. Guests were welcomed into a beautifully transformed space, thanks to the charming ambiance of The Kensington and the elegant floral centerpieces donated by Cooks and Company. The culinary highlight of the evening came courtesy of Next to the Salt Catering, whose decadent and artfully prepared spread delighted all in attendance.

The heart of the event was our keynote address by Dr. Lauren Brown, a nationally recognized expert in dementia care. Dr. Brown delivered a speech that was both informative and deeply moving — touching on the importance of community-based responses to dementia and inspiring attendees to take action in their own neighborhoods, workplaces, and families. Her words served as a powerful reminder that compassion and education go hand in hand in building dementia-friendly communities.

This evening would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our Dementia Friendly Galesburg Action Team. Their months of planning, outreach, and passion brought this initiative to life, and their work will continue as we roll out awareness trainings, develop partnerships with local businesses and organizations, and advocate for resources that support those impacted by dementia.

The kickoff event marks just the beginning. As we look ahead, we invite the entire Galesburg community to join us in this movement. Together, we can create a community where every person — regardless of cognitive ability — feels seen, valued, and supported.



## Stay Connected with VNA: Like, Share, and Be Part of the Story!

If you want to stay in the loop with all the amazing things happening at VNA Community Services, there's no better way than following us on social media! Our Facebook page [@knoxcountyvna](https://www.facebook.com/knoxcountyvna) is your go-to source for everything from heartfelt testimonials and affirmations from our seniors to snapshots of our fundraisers and all the good times had by all. We're rolling out a ton of new, original content—stories that matter, moments that inspire, and ways you can get involved in making Knox County a better place for our seniors. Whether it's upcoming events, important announcements, or just a glimpse into the joy we strive to bring to our community every day, you won't want to miss a thing. So go ahead, like our page, share our posts, and help us spread the word. Every click makes a difference and helps us continue our mission of supporting and uplifting our seniors. We can't wait to connect with you online!























DONATE TODAY TO IMMEDIATELY SUPPORT  
KNOX COUNTY SENIORS!





**2262 GRAND AVE.  
GALESBURG, IL 61401  
PHONE: (309) 342-1152**

## COMMUNITY SERVICES MAY 2025

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	S	S
			1	2 SENIOR SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM 	3	4
5 SENIOR SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM 	6  MISTER IT 9:30-11AM	7 CRAFTS 9-10AM 	8  CAREGIVER COUNSELOR OFFICE HOURS- NANCY DILLARD, ALTERNATIVES 9-11AM	9 SENIOR SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM SENIOR 	10	11
12 SENIOR SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM 	13  CHAIR EXERCISE 9:30AM VIRTUAL OPTION AVAILABLE!	14 CRAFTS 9-10AM 	15	16 SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM   CARD CLUB 1:45-3:45PM	17	18
19 SENIOR SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM 	20  MISTER IT 9:30-11AM	21 CRAFTS 9-10AM 	22 BINGO 10AM 	23 SENIOR SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM 	24	25
26 CLOSED MEMORIAL DAY 	27  CHAIR EXERCISE 9:30AM VIRTUAL OPTION AVAILABLE!	28 CRAFTS 9-10AM 	29	30 SENIOR SHARKS BILLARDS 10AM 	31	

\$5 Suggested Donation

No one will be turned away  
due to inability to pay

To reserve call 309-342-1152 by 12:30 day before.

# 2025 MAY

VNA Office Blue Bell Tower

2262 Grand Ave 300 N Jefferson St

Galesburg, IL Abingdon, IL

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

All Meals served  
with Bread and  
Milk

4

5

Tuna Salad Sandwich  
Kidney Bean Salad  
Carrot Sticks  
Fresh Orange  
Cookie Bar

6

Breakfast Casserole  
Yogurt Cup  
Fresh Banana  
Fruit Cup  
Juice  
Muffin

7

Scalloped Ham  
& Potatoes  
Peas & Carrots  
Tossed Salad  
Chilled Pears  
Fruit Pie

1

Baked Tortellini  
Garlic Toast Green  
Beans Tossed Salad  
Carrot Raisin Salad  
Cherry Fluff

2

Meatloaf  
Baked Potato  
Green Bean Casserole  
  
Cole Slaw  
Sliced Apple  
Cookie

3

11

12

BBQ Pork Sandwich  
Baked Potato  
Baked Beans  
Fruited Slaw  
Apricots  
Pudding Cup

13

Beef Stew  
Green Beans  
Kidney Bean Salad  
Mandarin Oranges  
Cookie

14

Goulash  
Glazed Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Pears  
Brownie

15

Italian Combo Slider  
Potato Salad  
Tossed Salad  
Mixed Fruit  
Creme Pie

16

Baked Ham Slice  
Party Potatoes  
Scalloped Corn  
Broccoli Ranch Salad  
Happy Birthday Cake  
Ice Cream

17

18

19

Cheeserite Sliders  
Cheesy Tots  
Succotash  
3 Bean Salad  
Fresh Apple  
Jello

20

Chicken Noodle Cass.  
California Mix  
Lettuce Salad  
Mixed Fruit  
Fruit Crisp

21

Beef Tamale Pie  
Refried Beans  
Salsa  
Cinnamon Applesauce  
Cookie

22

Potato Crusted Fish Filet  
Baked Potato  
Succotash  
Slaw  
Peaches  
Cake

23

Salisbury Steak  
Mashed Potato w/Gravy  
Corn  
Pea Salad  
Pears  
Brownie

24

25

26

CLOSED

27

Chef Salad  
Juice Cup  
Apple Slices  
Pudding Cup

28

Tuna & Noodles  
Asparagus  
Garbanzo Bean Salad  
Mixed Fruit  
Jello

29

Pizza Casserole  
Breadstick  
Tossed Salad  
Peas & Carrots  
Applesauce  
Brownie

30

Pork Roast  
Baked Potato & Carrots  
Baked Cabbage  
Mandarin Oranges  
Ice Cream Sandwich

31

# Introducing “Silver Screeners”: A New Way to Engage with Technology!

We're thrilled to announce the launch of Silver Screeners, a new program under our engAGED initiative that brings cutting-edge technology to our senior community through the use of state-of-the-art Virtual Reality (VR) headsets! Silver Screeners is designed to spark curiosity, connection, and fun by offering immersive experiences in a safe, supportive setting. Participants can explore virtual museum tours, scenic travel destinations, classic movies, and even light games — all without leaving their seat. Whether it's revisiting the streets of Paris, diving under the sea, or watching a favorite film on a giant virtual screen, this program opens a whole new world of possibilities.

Our VR headsets are easy to use and staff are available to assist participants throughout each session. No prior tech experience is needed — just a willingness to explore!

Please Note: Some individuals may experience mild motion sickness or dizziness while using VR equipment. We encourage participants to take breaks as needed and alert staff if any discomfort arises. Seating will always be available



during sessions.

Silver Screeners is more than entertainment — it's a window into the future, fostering digital literacy, social engagement, and joy through innovation. Come join us and see where VR can take you!

*With heartfelt thanks,*

*Michael Bennett*

*Executive Director, VNA Community  
Services*



## **DON'T FORGET!!!**

**What: Honor and Remember  
Garden Unveiling**

**When:** Friday, June 27th, 12-2pm

**Where:** The VNA, Galesburg, IL

**VNA  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**

**2262 Grand Ave  
Galesburg, IL 61401  
309-342-1152**