

# The Distinguished Reader

VNA  
Community  
Services



11/01/2023  
Volume 1, Issue V



## Turning Over a New Leaf

On October 1, the VNA turned over a new leaf as the new fiscal year began. Within this new year, we look forward to finding opportunities to help the older adults of Knox County.

Looking at the previous fiscal year, the VNA helped a total of over 1,500 older adults within the community and over 55,000 units of services. With our food services alone, we helped close to 600 individuals in the community and provided close to 50,000 units of service. With our Senior Health Assistance Programs (SHAP) we have helped over 800 people with over 2,000 units of service. And finally, with our general assistance, we have helped over 900 older folks within Knox County and have had over 2,000 units of service in general assistance. Besides just these services there have been many other ways we have offered assistance and resources to the community.

The team here at the VNA work hard every day to ensure that those in need find the support available to help. We are a group dedicated to being a rock and a pillar for the community. Above all, we are looking forward to ways to offer even more services and resources to the people of Knox County within this coming year. If you ever have any questions about the different services that we provide, please call us at (309)342-1152 or come out to visit our office at 2262 Grand Ave in Galesburg. Come and see what ways we here at the VNA can help you.

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- VNA has offered over 55,000 units of services
- Medicare Open Enrollment has begun
- Walker Kelley was given the Hometown Hero Award
- Our caseworkers helped 2 unhoused individuals



# Treat Yourself at Yoga



Leann Courson, our volunteer chair Yoga instructor, has been a dedicated part of the VNA team for some time now. And she has grown close with her chair Yoga students. In an effort to offer something extra to the program, Leann had a nails day for the ladies and even gentlemen that came to chair Yoga on the 26th of September. After the Yoga class, Leann set up and offered manicures and polish to those who signed up for it.

Leann hopes too in the future to have more activities that follow Yoga to give the participants of the class something extra. Leann hopes to not only help with physical healing through the class, but also mental healing through a day to treat yourself. If you or someone you know would like to join Leann in her chair Yoga class, the classes are held every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 10 am.

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*As Program Director, Walker's management of the different programs and attention to detail are unmatched.*

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# Hometown Hero



On September 29th, Walker Kelly, the Program Director at the VNA, was surprised with the ServPro Hometown Hero Award. KWQC TV6 as well as his family, coworkers, and clients that he's worked closely with gathered to give Walker the award based on his excellent service and dedication to his community. Walker was also presented with a \$100 check to donate to the organization of his choice and a \$50 gift card for himself.

As Program Director, Walker's management of the different programs and attention to detail are unmatched. He is also an incredibly knowledgeable and helpful individual to the community of Knox County. Walker works tirelessly to provide all resources and services that he can to the clients of the VNA. If you would like to come receive assistance from our Hometown Hero, join us at the VNA.

The VNA is funded in part by the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging.





### RAISING THE ROOF

Hello friends and supporters of VNA Community Services.

We're excited to kick off our year-long "Raise the Roof" fundraising campaign, and we need your help.

VNA Community Services has been a pillar of this community for years, providing essential support to those in need. However, our roof, which has seen countless individuals and families under it, is now in need of some support.

We're on a mission to raise \$25,000 to restore our roof to its original, sturdy state, ensuring that it continues to protect our valuable programs and services. This campaign is a collective effort, and we invite both businesses and individuals to join hands with us in this vital endeavor.

Let's come together as a community to ensure that VNA Community Services can continue its mission of serving those in need. Our roof may need a little help, but with your support, we'll make it stronger than ever.



*"There are many places within the community ready to provide information or support so you and your loved ones can live happily and safely."*

## SHIP Counseling Open Enrollment

On October 16th, the Annual Open Enrollment for Medicare began and will last until December 7th. During this time, our SHIP Counselors will be available to take appointments for clients to compare their current Part C or Part D plans with other Medicare approved plans. Medicare Part C are the Medicare advantage plans, which combine Parts A and B of Original Medicare and include additional benefits such as vision, dental and hearing among other services. Many advantage plans also offer prescription drug plans as well. Prescription drug plans are Part D of Medicare. Clients can also choose to only see a comparison of a Part C or Part D plan.

To do a comparison of a Part C or Part D plan, clients must already be enrolled in Part A and/or Part B of Original Medicare and must complete our Medicare information form at the VNA. Once this form is complete, clients can make an appointment with one of our SHIP counselors.

The SHIP counselors at the VNA are trained volunteers that are meant to help compare current plans with potential plans that they may want to enroll in. SHIP counselors are not to sell anything to you, they are only meant to help compare and advise options that are available for Medicare Part C and D. If you or someone you know would like to come to the VNA and get a comparison or if you have any Medicare questions in general, then call today at (309)342-1152 and get information on next steps for you.

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Support local community businesses that support the VNA.



# Helping the Unhoused

Over the past few months, two of our caseworkers, Jackie Weidenhamer and Marcus Bailey, have taken strides to help two individuals struggling with housing security in Knox County. Jackie and Marcus both helped to find resources in the community for these individuals to contact for support. They also helped the two individuals find secure housing for themselves within the community.

We at the VNA would like to commend these two caseworkers for the hard work and support they provided. If you or someone you know is struggling with secure housing, reach out to the VNA, Salvation Army, the Rescue Mission, and the Veterans Assistance Commission for assistance.

better with age.



*"The resources within Knox County focused not only on food but also housing and transportation for those in need."*

# Shelf Stable Solidarity

On September 25th, VNA Community Services teamed up with United Way of Knox County for their United Way Day of Action. Many volunteers from the community came out to help pack, load, and deliver our Shelf Stable meals to the community.

The VNA began providing these Shelf Stable meals during the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to give extra support to those in Knox County that receive Home Delivered Meals. Since the pandemic, these Shelf Stable meals have remained for our older adults still receiving Home Delivered Meals.

The Shelf Stable meals are

exactly as the name sounds. These are meals that are nonperishable and can provide extra food security along with the Home Delivered Meal services for older adults in need.

Our volunteers that delivered traveled throughout the entirety of Knox County to help provide support and services. We at the VNA are very proud to be a part of a community that is so dedicated to offering support to those in need throughout Knox County.



The VNA is funded in part by the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging.



## VNA COMMUNITY SERVICES

VNA is the premier senior social services agency of Knox County. It is our mission to provide access to services and programs that either maintain or improve the quality of life for the seniors of our community allowing them to remain thriving in their homes.



Michael John Bennett  
Executive Director

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*...better with age*



# From the Director's Desk

Folks,

In the world of caregiving, compassion and dedication are paramount. Yet, one often overlooked aspect of this noble profession is the toll it can take on caregivers themselves. Caregiver fatigue, also known as caregiver burnout, is a growing concern that deserves our attention. In this article, we will shed light on the need to stifle caregiver fatigue and highlight its importance.

Caregiver fatigue is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that arises from the continuous demands of caregiving. It can affect anyone providing care, whether for aging parents, a chronically ill family member, or individuals with disabilities. The responsibilities are constant, and the pressure can be overwhelming.

1. **Quality of Care:** A fatigued caregiver may find it challenging to provide the level of care their loved one truly deserves. When caregivers are at their best, they can offer more effective

and compassionate care.

2. **Health Impact:** Caregiver fatigue can lead to a decline in the caregiver's physical and mental health. Neglecting their well-being can result in chronic stress, depression, and even physical illnesses.

3. **Strain on Relationships:** Caregiver fatigue can strain relationships within families and with the care recipient. This can lead to conflict, guilt, and resentment.

4. **Impact on Work:** Many caregivers juggle caregiving with employment. The stress and fatigue can affect job performance, potentially leading to career setbacks.

**How to Stifle Caregiver Fatigue:**

1. **Self-Care:** Caregivers must prioritize self-care. This includes taking breaks, maintaining a healthy diet, and ensuring they get adequate rest.

2. **Seek Support:** Reach out to friends, family, or support groups. You don't

have to go through this journey alone.

3. **Respite Care:** Consider respite care services that provide temporary relief for caregivers. This allows you to recharge and maintain your well-being.

4. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. It's okay to ask for help and set boundaries.

5. **Professional Help:** If needed, don't hesitate to seek counseling or therapy to manage the emotional toll of caregiving.

Caregiver fatigue is a silent epidemic that can have far-reaching consequences. It's our collective responsibility to recognize the challenges caregivers face and support them in their selfless dedication. By stifling caregiver fatigue, we not only improve the quality of care for those in need but also preserve the well-being of those who give so much of themselves.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about this crucial issue. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of caregivers and the ones they care for.

Sincerely,

Michael John Bennett

Executive Director

VNA Community Services

