

—The March Issue 2025—

The Distinguished Reader

A newsletter made to inform and support Knox County Seniors.



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VNA Community Services: Standing Strong—No Matter What

By Michael Bennett, Executive Director

Mark Twain once said, "The rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated." Let me tell you, those words have never rung truer than they do today for VNA Community Services. Despite the storm of overdue reimbursements and the many perilous and uncertain variables we face, we are not backing down. Not an inch. Not a chance.

We're still on the lookout for hundreds of thousands of dollars owed to us—money that should already be feeding, supporting, and uplifting our community's seniors. And while others might see this as a sign to retreat, cut back, or play it safe, that is not who we are. There are zero plans to scale back services or cut personnel. Period. We are here for our seniors, and nothing is going to change that.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: We are not just surviving.



"There needs to be an increase in support—financial, volunteer, and strategic—to ensure we can continue to meet the demand not only today but for years to come."

Prescription Power: VNA Saves Seniors \$659,000 in Life-Changing Med Costs!

VNA's SHIP Program Saves Knox County Seniors Over \$659,000! I am beyond proud to share the incredible success of our Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) during the recent open enrollment period. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our certified SHIP counselors—Walker, Jackie, and Rebecca—and the tireless support of our entire administrative team, VNA Community Services helped Knox County seniors save over \$659,000 in medication costs!

This isn't just a number—it's a life-saving, life-changing impact.

We are striving to usher in a golden age for Knox County seniors—one where no senior goes without a meal, a helping hand, or a voice advocating for them. But here's the truth: We need more buy-in from our community, from our city and county leaders, and from every person who believes our seniors deserve to live with dignity and security.

Over the past four years, our services have grown exponentially. We've stepped up, time and time again, to meet the needs of our community. But with the number of seniors on the rise, we cannot do it alone. There needs to be an increase in support—financial, volunteer, and strategic—to ensure we can continue to meet the demand not only today but for years to come. Knox County has the opportunity to lead by example, to show what it truly means to care for our elders.

You'll be seeing a lot more of me in the weeks and months ahead. I'll be at community board meetings, in the local news, and everywhere else there is "skin in the game" for our seniors. I will not rest until every resource, every opportunity, and every bit of support that belongs to our community finds its way home to Knox County.

This isn't just a job. It's a mission. It's personal. And we're just getting started.

For many seniors, these savings mean the difference between affording essential prescriptions and making painful sacrifices. It's the difference between hope and hardship, and it speaks volumes about the real-world impact we strive to make every single day.

To our team: Thank you for your expertise, your empathy, and your relentless commitment to our mission. You make the impossible possible, and our entire community is stronger because of you. And to our community: This is why we do what we do. Every call, every consultation, every hour spent pouring over plans is part of our promise to ensure that no senior in Knox County has to go without. Stay tuned—there's more to come!

Dementia Friendly Galesburg: A New Chapter for Our Community

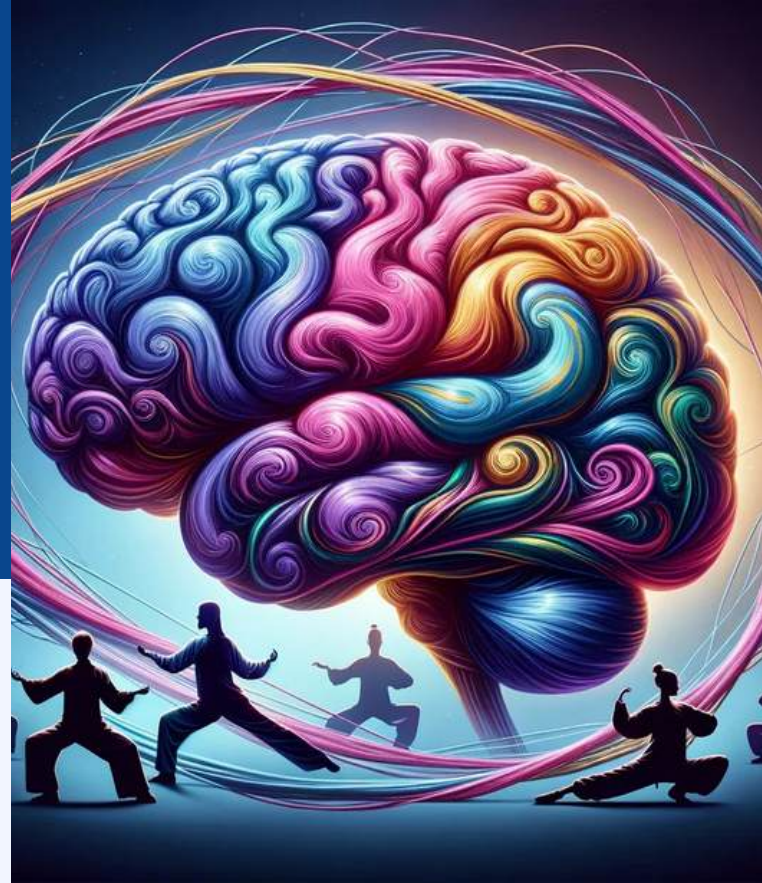
Dementia Friendly Galesburg: A New Chapter for Our Community

We are on the cusp of something truly extraordinary. After months of planning, collaboration, and unwavering dedication, I am thrilled to announce the upcoming unveiling of Dementia Friendly Galesburg—a movement that will transform our community into a place where those living with dementia and their caregivers are truly seen, heard, and supported.

This initiative is not just a program; it's a promise. A promise that Galesburg will be a community where compassion meets action, where businesses, organizations, and everyday citizens come together to create a safe and welcoming environment for all. This is about breaking down barriers, erasing stigma, and building bridges of understanding and support.

Our action team—comprised of community champions like Noelle Thompson, Walker Kelly, Jackie Jennings, Leann Porter, Laun Dunn, and WIAAA—is ready to hit the ground running. Each member brings a wealth of knowledge, passion, and heart to the table, and together, we are determined to make Galesburg a model city for dementia-friendly practices.

We are incredibly grateful for the \$25,000 in initial funding from WIAAA, but this is only the beginning.



"This is about breaking down barriers, erasing stigma, and building bridges of understanding and support."

We need the entire community to rally around this cause. We need businesses to adapt, neighbors to educate themselves, and leaders to champion policies that support our seniors and their families.

When you see the Dementia Friendly Galesburg logo around town, know that it represents more than just an initiative—it represents hope, dignity, and a brighter future for everyone touched by dementia.

Stay tuned for more details about our official unveiling event, where you'll learn how you can get involved and help us create a kinder, more inclusive Galesburg. This is a movement that belongs to all of us, and I cannot wait to see what we can accomplish together.

We're not just opening a new chapter; we're writing a new story—one filled with empathy, action, and real change. And I promise you, this is just the beginning.

VNA's Honor and Remember Garden: A Tribute to Our Community, Built by Our Community

We are thrilled to announce the completion of our Honor and Remember Garden, a beautiful space dedicated to honoring the lives and legacies of our seniors and community members. This garden is more than just a patch of earth—it's a living testament to love, respect, and gratitude, made possible by the incredible support of our community.

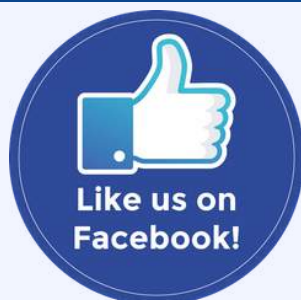
A special thank you goes out to our local Boy Scout Troop and now Eagle Scout, Xavier Robertson, whose leadership and hard work brought this project to life. His dedication and commitment are an inspiration to us all, and we could not be more grateful for his efforts.

As we look forward to the planting season, we are in need of green thumb volunteers to help us bring this garden to full bloom.

Whether you're an experienced gardener or just love getting your hands a little dirty, your help will make a world of difference. It's a chance to be part of something beautiful—literally and figuratively!

If you'd like to volunteer, please call our office directly or stop by to sign up. Let's dig in and make this garden a place of peace, beauty, and remembrance for our entire community.

**DONATE TODAY TO IMMEDIATELY SUPPORT
KNOX COUNTY SENIORS!**



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

















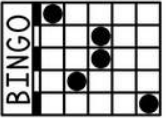


If you want to stay in the loop with all the amazing things happening at VNA Community Services, there's no better way than following us on social media! Our Facebook page [@knoxcountyvna](https://www.facebook.com/knoxcountyvna) is your go-to source for everything from heartfelt testimonials and affirmations 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!



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

COMMUNITY SERVICES MARCH 2025

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	S	S
3  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM	4  MISTER IT 9:30-11AM ***CAREGIVER STRESSBUSTERS 2:00-3:30PM	5  CRAFTS 9-10AM	6	7  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM	8	9
10  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM	11  CHAIR EXERCISE 9:30AM ***CAREGIVER STRESSBUSTERS 2:00-3:30PM	12  CRAFTS 9-10AM	13	14  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM	15	16
17  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM	18  MISTER IT 9:30-11AM ***CAREGIVER STRESSBUSTERS 2:00-3:30PM	19  CRAFTS 9-10AM	20	21  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM  CARD CLUB 1:45-3:45PM	22	23
24  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM	25  CHAIR EXERCISE 9:30AM ***CAREGIVER STRESSBUSTERS 2:00-3:30PM	26  CRAFTS 9-10AM	27  BINGO 10AM	28  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM	29	30
31  SENIOR SHARKS BILLIARDS 10AM						

***Caregiver Stressbusters requires a sign up ahead of time. Ask a caseworker today on how you or a caregiving family member can sign up for the next session.

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

\$5 Suggested Donation
No one will be turned away
due to inability to pay

2025 MARCH

VNA Office Blue Bell Tower
2262 Grand Ave 300 N Jefferson St
Galesburg, IL Abingdon, IL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>All Meals served with Bread and Milk</p>						1
2	<p>3 BBQ Chicken Sandwich Baked Potato Baked Beans Fruited Slaw Apricots Pudding Cup</p>	<p>4 Beef Stroganoff Green Beans Kidney Bean Salad Mandarin Oranges Cookie</p>	<p>5 Chicken Parmesan w/ Noodles Glazed Carrots Broccoli Fresh Orange Fruit Cobbler</p>	<p>6 Ham & Cheese Sliders Potato Salad Tossed Salad Mixed Fruit Creme Pie</p>	<p>7 Chicken Stuffing Cass. Party Potatoes Scalloped Corn Broccoli Ranch Salad Birthday Cake Ice Cream</p>	8
9	<p>10 Sloppy Joe Sliders Cheesy Tots Succotash 3 Bean Salad Fresh Apple Jello</p>	<p>11 Chicken & Rice Cass. Mixed Vegetable Lettuce Salad Mixed Fruit Fruit Crisp</p>	<p>12 Enchiladas Spanish Rice Refried Beans Doritos Cinnamon Applesauce</p>	<p>13 Salmon Patties Baked Potato Succotash Slaw Peaches Cake</p>	<p>14 Swiss Steak Mashed Potato w/Gravy Corn Pea Salad Pears</p>	15
16	<p>17 Cheeseburger Mac Herb Baked Potatoes Stewed Tomatoes Cucumber Salad Pears</p>	<p>18 Taco Salad Juice Cup Fresh Apple Slices Caramel Cup</p>	<p>19 Chicken Tetrazzini Asparagus Garbanzo Bean Salad Mixed Fruit Jello</p>	<p>20 Pizza Casserole Tossed Salad Peas N Carrots Garlic Toast Applesauce Brownie</p>	<p>21 Beef Roast Roast Potatoes & Carrots Baked Cabbage Mandarin Oranges</p>	22
23	<p>24 Bacon Cheeseburger Baked Beans Pickled Beets Apricots Pudding Cup</p>	<p>25 Beef & Broccoli Rice w/Vegetables Cauliflower Fresh Orange Fruit Cobbler</p>	<p>26 Ham & Beans Cornbread Parslied Potatoes Pickled Carrots Cinnamon Applesauce Ice Cream</p>	<p>27 Meatloaf Baked Potato Green Bean Casserole Slaw Fresh Apple Cookie</p>	<p>28 Breakfast Casserole Yogurt Cup Fresh Banana Fruit Cup Juice Coffee Cake</p>	29
30	<p>31 Ham Salad Sandwich Kidney Bean Salad Carrot Sticks Fresh Apple Cookie Bar</p>					

6th Annual "Put Your Heart Into It" Fundraiser Makes a Big Impact!

We are thrilled to share that our 6th annual Put Your Heart Into It fundraiser was a tremendous success! Although the final numbers are still being tallied, we are on pace to raise at least \$15,000 to support our Home Delivered Meals Program, which provides nutritious meals to food-insecure seniors throughout our community.

This incredible achievement was made possible by the unwavering support and generosity of our local businesses, community partners, and dedicated volunteers. Your participation and contributions directly impact our mission to ensure no senior goes hungry or feels isolated.

Every dollar raised through this event helps us continue delivering meals, comfort, and hope to those who need it most. With the cost of each meal at \$6.45, your generosity means thousands of meals will be delivered to seniors who rely on this vital service.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all of our sponsors, donors, and volunteers who helped make this event such a success. Your commitment to our community's well-being is genuinely inspiring, and we are so grateful for your partnership.



Stay tuned for more updates as we finalize the numbers, and thank you again for helping us "Put Your Heart Into It." Together, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of our seniors!

With heartfelt thanks,
Michael Bennett
Executive Director, VNA Community Services



DON'T FORGET!!!

**What: Dementia Friendly
Galesburg Kickoff**

When: Friday, May 2nd, 5-8pm

Where: The Kensington, Galesburg, IL

**VNA
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

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