

Aging Matters



Providing. Caring. Connecting.

Winter 2009



St. Charles County senior center participants will enjoy Wii games weekly in February. (Photo by Becky Marvin.)

Wii Craze Sweeps Senior Centers

Computer games — they're not just for kids anymore.

The Nintendo Wii (pronounced "we") system, featuring easy-to-play, fun and familiar games such as bowling, golf and tennis, has become a hit at MEAAA's senior centers.

Players use a lightweight wireless device that allows them to play simulated golf indoors and simulated bowling without having to roll a heavy ball or rent shoes.

Everyone over 60 is welcome to participate and try out this wildly popular video game system. Senior centers in St. Charles County will host Wii games in February on this schedule (subject to change): Tuesdays — St. Charles, 1455 Fairgrounds; Wednesdays — St. Peters, 108 McMenamy; Thursdays — O'Fallon, 106 N. Main; and Fridays — Wentzville, 506 S. Linn.

Staff and volunteers will guide you through the steps in playing the Wii games. Call Becky Marvin, 636-207-0847, for more information.



Protecting your personal information is the best defense in the fight against healthcare fraud and abuse. Every day, consumers get ripped off by scam artists. Medicare and Medicaid lose billions of dollars each year. You can make a difference!

Here are some ways to protect your healthcare benefits:

- Treat your Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security numbers like credit card numbers. Never give these numbers to a stranger.
- Remember, Medicare doesn't call or visit to sell you anything.
- Record doctor visits, tests and procedures in a personal health care journal or calendar.
- Read your Medicare Summary Notice. Look for three things:
 - ✓ charges for something you didn't get
 - ✓ billing for the same thing twice
 - ✓ services that weren't ordered by your doctor

The Missouri SMP, funded through the U.S. Administration on Aging, has tools to help you prevent Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse. Personal Healthcare Journals are available free-of-charge to use for recording doctor visits, tests and procedures. Tracking envelopes are available to keep your Medicare Summary Notices together along with your doctor's bills and other insurance statements. Volunteers are trained to assist with any questions or concerns you may have.

To order materials or to contact a volunteer, call the Missouri SMP at 1-888-515-6565 or MEAAA at 636-207-0847 or 1-800-AGE-6060.

MEAAA Foundation Honors Simon Foundation

Board Members Recognized For Support Of Supply Bank For Senior Independence

The Mid-East Area Agency on Aging Foundation has honored the Mildred, Herbert and Julian Simon Foundation for seven years of generous support.

At a wine and cheese reception Jan. 10 hosted by Clayton on the Park, MEAAA Foundation Co-presidents Lynn Davis and Bonnie Solomon presented a special award to Simon Foundation steering committee members Lewis Chartock and Lucy Lopata. The Simon Foundation has awarded grants totalling \$215,000 to the MEAAA Foundation over the past seven years.

The Simon Foundation's grants supported a unique and innovative service, the Supply Bank for Senior Independence, which provides adult incontinence products and liquid nutritional supplements at no charge to frail older adults.

Davis noted that the Simon Foundation's generosity has made it possible for about 1,400 seniors to receive incontinence products that allow them to avoid skin and bladder infections. Adult diapers, expensive items that rarely are covered by Medicare or private insurance, allow seniors to continue living at home in their own communities.

"Not only do these incontinence products allow people to avoid hospitalizations and nursing home placement," said Mary Schaefer, MEAAA Foundation executive director, "but

they allow them to visit with family and friends, go to senior centers, and attend religious services without fear of embarrassment."

Chartock said the Simon Foundation has chosen to support the Supply Bank for many years because of the difference it makes in the lives of frail older adults.

The MEAAA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization supporting the

programs and services of Mid-East Area Agency on Aging. MEAAA is a non-profit organization providing services and information to people age 60 and older and their caregivers in the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin and Jefferson.

For more information on the Supply Bank and the MEAAA Foundation, call 636-207-0847 or 1-800-AGE-6060.



At a reception Jan. 10, MEAAA Foundation co-presidents Lynn Davis and Bonnie Solomon presented a special award to Mildred, Herbert and Julian Simon Foundation steering committee members Lewis Chartock and Lucy Lopata for their seven years of support. From left: Davis, Chartock, Solomon, Lopata and MEAAA Foundation Executive Director Mary Schaefer.

Fish Oil Found To Boost Heart Health

Question: *My doctor told me to take fish oil. My wife tells me flaxseed oil is just as good as fish oil. What is the difference between these two and why are they important for my health?*

Answer: Fish oil has been found to have several benefits to the heart, which is why it has become a popular nonprescription supplement. In patients with coronary heart disease, fish oil has been shown to decrease plaque formation in the arteries and decrease the risk of heart attack, stroke and death. It also has been found to decrease the risk of severe abnormal heart rhythm and reduce triglyceride levels. Fish oil also can slightly lower blood pressure. Most of these benefits have been seen in both men and women.

Fish oil is more potent than flaxseed oil. Thus, a person needs to take higher doses of flaxseed oil to get the same amount of beneficial omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oil. These beneficial omega-3 fatty acids in fish oil are eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). In contrast, flaxseed oil contains alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which is an omega-3 fatty acid found in plants. ALA is converted in the body to EPA and DHA. Only EPA and DHA are known to have health benefits.

Your doctor likely wants you to take fish oil to protect your heart or lower triglycerides. How much you need to take depends on whether or not you have heart disease and the rea-



Hedva Levy,
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Ask The Pharmacist

son your doctor wants you to take it. Confirm the reason with your doctor.

The American Heart Association recommends that if you have no heart disease you eat two servings of fish per week for general heart protection. Choose from oily fish such as salmon, herring, mackerel, lake trout and albacore tuna.

If you have coronary heart disease (for example, you have had a heart attack, stents placed or are taking medicine to treat chest pain), it is recommended that you get approximately one gram (1000 mg) per day of the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA. Finally, if you take fish oil to lower triglyceride levels, the recommended dose is two to four grams (2000 to 4000 mg) per day of EPA

and DHA. Anyone who takes three grams or more per day of fish oil should do so only with their doctor's supervision because of an increased risk of bleeding at the higher doses. There also is a prescription omega-3 fatty acid product called Lovaza®, which might benefit patients who need to take high doses for triglyceride lowering.

It is important to select a fish oil product carefully. Check the label to be sure you are getting the correct amounts of EPA and DHA. While the label might state "1000 mg fish oil," you need to know how much EPA and DHA are in each tablet and how many tablets equal one dose. Some products have as little as 300 mg of EPA and DHA per dose. Look for a statement on the label that the product has been tested for quality and purity or that it is United States Pharmacopeia (USP) verified. This is to ensure the product does not contain high levels of contaminants like mercury. A common side effect of fish oil is a fishy aftertaste or fishy-smelling burps. To minimize this side effect, start with a low dose. Increase the amount you take slowly until you reach your recommended daily dose. Also, keeping the fish oil tablets in the refrigerator and taking them at bedtime should help.

Thanks to Jenny Toney, student at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy at the time of writing, for her assistance in developing this response.

Aging Matters

Aging Matters is a publication of Mid-East Area Agency on Aging, a non-profit organization providing services and information to people age 60 and over and their caregivers.

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On the World Wide Web:
www.mid-eastaaa.org

E-mail:
info@mid-eastaaa.org

Our Mission:
Assisting Adults Through the
Journey of Aging



Reading Is Relative

Program Encourages Seniors To Share Books With Children In Their Lives

"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all." — Jacqueline Kennedy

"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." — Dr. Seuss, "I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!"

MEAAA is sponsoring a program that helps grandparents raising grandchildren support each other and enjoy an enriching activity with the children in their lives.

The Reading is Relative program holds activities every other month in north St. Louis County that explore popular children's books and stage interactive games for kids and their caregivers based on the story.

The most recent event's book was "Clifford's First Snow Day," starring the lovable red dog well-known to pre-schoolers. The adults and children read the book together and then searched for pictures of Clifford in shredded-paper "snow."

"Studies show that successful reading sets the stage for a lifetime of learning," says Margi Valleroy, Reading is Relative coordinator. "The program uses reading to strengthen the bond between the kids and the relatives raising them."

The events also give the children's caregivers, who commonly are their grandparents, a chance to compare notes and encourage each other in their later-life child



rearing.

The Brookdale Foundation has provided generous support for the Reading is Relative program, which also publishes a newsletter for its participants that introduces the book the will be featured at the next event.

Although space is limited for the upcoming activities, caregivers can contact Valleroy at 636-207-0847 for registration information. The program is open to grandparents and other relatives raising children as their own.



Michael, age 16 months, enjoys the activities in the Reading is Relative program Jan. 23 at the Florissant Valley Library. The program, sponsored by MEAAA and supported by the Brookdale Foundation, links grandparents (and other relatives) raising grandchildren. The activities allow grandparents to support each other and share the love of reading with the children in their lives. (Photos by Leslie Johnson.)

Tributes

Call the MEAAA Foundation when you want to send a Tribute in honor of someone's birthday, anniversary, health or any other special occasion. The MEAAA Foundation will gladly send a note to the person you want to honor with your gift. A \$100 contribution will entitle you to 10 tributes.

For details call 636-207-0847 or 1-800-AGE-6060. Or send your tax-deductible donation to the MEAAA Foundation, 14535 Manchester Road, Manchester, MO 63011.

**Gifts to the MEAAA Foundation
Oct. 24, 2008-Jan. 23, 2009**

The Wal-Mart Foundation, Kraft Foods

- Joan Abrams, Marilyn Abrams, Alice Albro, Frank & Ilse Altman, Barbara & Dan Bindler, Samuel & Shirley Bluestein, Ivan & Linda Blumoff, Myril Brod, Marcy Brodsky, Mr. & Mrs. Eldon Broman, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Burstein, E.M. Burwell, Gary & Karen Cronin, Leo & Kay Drey, Irvin Fagin, Paul & Terry Flotken, Lois Goldring, Sandra Greenberg, Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Greenstein, Cory Hartung, Zena Hellman, Margaret Jones, Frank & Eunice Klaas, Jerome & Linda Kraus, Mike & Fritzi Lainoff, Phyllis & Ken Langsdorf, Maxine Levy, Michael Litwack, Suzanne McQuie, Edyce & Leslie Perlmutter, Alan & Donna Rosenberg, Elizabeth Rubenstein, Mahlon & Maurine Rubin, Dr. & Mrs. Michael Rumelt, Harold Schneider, Hyim Shafner & Sara Winkelman, Harold & Ruth Sher, Rabbi Mark Shook & Congregation Temple Israel, Bonnie & Norman Solomon, Sanford Spitzer, Gail Thompson*

- In Honor of Dee Rosenthal**
- In Honor of Ann Pereles**
- In Honor of Tilford Hearsh**
- In Honor of David Feldman**
- In Memory of Elvin Silverman**
- In Memory of Irving Kramer**
Al Ukman
- In Honor of Sherry Merrick**
- In Honor of Al Ukman**
Alice & Howard Handelman
- In Honor of Barbara Bindler**
- In Memory of Mildred Spitzer**
Judy & Phil Kaplan
- In Honor of Phyllis Langsdorf**
Jane & Robert Feibel
- In Honor of Mrs. Paul Weisman**
Albert & Edith Price
- In Honor of Freyda Fredman**
Jeanette Rubin
- In Honor of Sheila Cawns**
Mary Ann Shaw
- In Memory of Irma Watson**
*Chris Gill, Brenda Watson
Sandy & David Alvarez*
- In Memory of Graham & Marybelle Ludlow**
Derek & Judith Nagle
- In Memory of Janette Myles**
Sheila & Albert Cawns
- In Memory of Roger K. Griggs**
Ruth Griggs
- In Memory of Alice Ann Parker**
Carol Korte
- In Memory of Inez Sanders**
Lora Lee Euler
- In Memory of Goldie Strickler**
William & Deborah Braun
- In Memory of Minnie Cherrick**
Sylvia Cherrick

Digital TV Switch Postponed To June 12

Still Time To Put Your Name On Waiting List For Converter Box Coupon



Federal Communications Commission outreach coordinator Rebekah Bina shows how a new digital converter box makes it possible to continue using an older television set. Most people will get a clearer TV picture with the converter box if they use an adequate antenna.

By now, you've heard that TV is switching to a new broadcast system, called digital TV (DTV) on June 12 (postponed by Congress from the old date of Feb. 17). But if you haven't yet bought that converter box that will allow you to continue using your old TV, apply before March 31 for a coupon worth \$40 toward the cost.

In January, the TV Converter Box Coupon Program reached its funding ceiling. Congress is considering providing more funding, but in the meantime, coupon requests from eligible households will be filled on a first-come-first-served basis as funds become available from expiring coupons. If you're eligible and you'd like to apply for a coupon today, you'll be placed on a waiting list.

You can visit www.dtv2009.gov on the Web to download the application or apply on-line to be put on the waiting list for coupons. You can also apply by phone at 1-888-DTV-2009, toll-free. Or you can clip the application on this page and mail it to the address listed at the top of the form. A person living in a nursing home needs a coupon application that is different from the one on this page (call 1-888-DTV-2009 to get it) and is only allowed one coupon. Those living in private residences are allowed two coupons per household.

Keep in mind that if you haven't requested your coupon yet, there may not be new funds available before the deadline. You will either have to buy a converter box at full price (\$50 and up) or wait to see if the coupon arrives. If you don't have the converter box hooked up on June 12, your TV will not receive any channels.

The coupon will expire 90 days after it is mailed, so use it quickly once you get it.

You won't need the converter box if you've got cable or satellite TV, or if you've recently bought a TV with a digital tuner. Your instruction manual will tell you if your tuner is digital.

But if your TV is older and you're using an antenna to get your programs, you'll need the digital converter box.

Adjust Your Antenna

If you already get good reception with your current antenna, you probably won't need a new one to use with your converter box. In fact, since DTV is free of the hobgoblins of old-fashioned analog TV, such as "snow" and "ghosts," you may find your reception is much clearer than it used

to be.

But because of the nature of DTV, you may find that you either get a crystal clear picture or none at all. However, small adjustments to your antenna can make a big difference in the number of digital channels you can receive. If you have an indoor antenna, try elevating it and moving it closer to an exterior wall of your home. After adjusting your antenna, perform a channel scan to see if your reception is improved.

While adjusting your antenna, it may be helpful to access the "signal strength meter" on your digital-to-analog converter box or digital television to determine whether your adjustments are improving the signals' strength. The signal strength meter is usually accessed through the menu feature on your remote control. Refer to the owner's manual of your device for detailed instructions on how to perform a channel scan and access its signal strength meter. You should do another channel scan after you have adjusted your antenna and do additional scans every few months to see if new channels are available.

Continued on Page 4



**TV CONVERTER BOX
COUPON PROGRAM**
PO Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000

Form Approved
OMB No. 0680-0024



Apply online:
www.DTV2009.gov

Apply by phone:
1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009)

Deaf or hard of hearing callers:
1-877-530-2634 TTY - English
1-866-495-1161 TTY - Spanish

Fax applications to:
1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4622)

Mail applications to:
PO Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE
SUBMITTED BY MARCH 31, 2009.**

COUPON APPLICATION All information must be filled out. Please type or print clearly.
This Application is to apply for a \$40 Coupon which can be used towards the purchase of a TV converter box.

1. Your Name and Address.

NAME	First	Middle	Last
HOME ADDRESS	Street Address		Apt #
	City	State	Zip

If the US Post Office does not deliver mail to your Home Address, provide as much information as you can above regarding your Home Address and provide your Mailing Address below.

MAILING ADDRESS	Street Address - or - P.O. Box #	Apt #	
<small>If different than above</small>	City	State	Zip

2. TV Service: Check the statement below that best describes your household.

All or some of the TVs in my house are connected to one or more pay services, such as cable or satellite.

None of the TVs in my house are connected to one or more pay services, such as cable or satellite.

3. Coupons Requested: How many coupons do you want? ONE - OR - TWO

4. Signature: By signing below, you declare that the above is true and correct.

Signature	Date
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Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), unless that collection displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. Information collected using this form will not be sold.

News & Notes

MEAAA Public Hearings

MEAAA will hold a series of public hearings to present the agency's budget and goals for fiscal year 2010 (which begins July 1, 2009). The public is invited to attend and learn about MEAAA's programs and ask questions about the agency's FY 2010 plan. All hearings are at 10:30 a.m.

Monday, Feb. 16

St. Charles Senior Center, 1455 Fairgrounds

Wednesday, Feb. 18

Union Senior Center, 1329 N. Union

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Arnold Senior Center, 1695 Missouri State Rd.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

Ochs (University City) Senior Center, 975 Pennsylvania



Transitions

MEAAA welcomes **Melissa Hildebrandt** (top right) as the new information and assistance specialist for Franklin County. For questions about services for older adults in Franklin County, call Melissa at 636-583-8919.

Our sympathies to the families of former MEAAA board members **Lester Bohle** (center right) and **Mary Anne Cordes** (bottom right). Mr. Bohle died Jan. 18 and Mrs. Cordes on Nov. 7.

Mr. Bohle, a former Franklin County commissioner, had retired from the MEAAA board in July, and Mrs. Cordes, a long-time volunteer for the St. Louis County Older Resident Programs, was a member of the MEAAA advisory council at the time of her passing.

Christmas Day Meals Program

The 2008 MEAAA Christmas Day Meals Program thanks all of the volunteers who contributed to its success. The program brought a hot meal and a gift bag to more than 500 seniors who were home alone on the holiday. We extend our gratitude to the following donors who made the program possible: **Harrah's Hotel and Casino, Sunrise Assisted Living, Joan D'Ambrose, Dierberg's, Rehab Care, the Johnson and Wyrick families, Mrs. Dotson.**

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

MEAAA, AARP, the St. Louis County Older Resident Programs and the Gateway EITC Community Coalition will provide free income tax preparation for low- and moderate-income filers throughout the St. Louis metro area through April 15. Call 636-207-0847 for information.

TV Converter Box

Continued from page 3

Television stations broadcasting in digital use both the VHF band (channels 2-13) and UHF band (channels 14-51). Many indoor antennas use "rabbit ears" for the VHF band and a "loop" or "bow-tie" antenna for the UHF band. Make sure you are using an antenna that covers both the VHF and UHF bands and have connected it properly.

If you're still having trouble get-

ting your stations, you should consider getting an amplified indoor antenna or an outdoor antenna. Your local electronics store or the TV department of any department store should be able to help.

Once you get your DTV converter box up and running, you'll be able to get several new channels even without cable or satellite TV. KETC Channel 9 now provides four different channels of free, over-the-air programming. Visit www.ketc.org for a schedule.

Be Ready For Bone-Chilling Weather

United Way And Operation Weather Survival Offer Tips To Help You In Hazardous Conditions

Operation Weather Survival and United Way of Greater St. Louis remind you to take care during cold weather advisories, warnings and emergencies.

For information on what to do during a cold-weather emergency, Missouri residents should call 2-1-1 while cell phone users and metro-East Illinois residents can call 1-800-427-4626.

For senior citizens worried about not being able to pay for heating, bill assistance information is available by calling United Way at 2-1-1 or 1-800-427-4626. All calls are free and confidential and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year.

Taking preventive action is your best defense against having to deal with extreme cold-weather conditions. By preparing your home and car in advance for winter emergencies, and by observing safety precautions during times of extremely cold weather, you can reduce the risk of weather-related health problems.

Below are tips to help keep you safe and warm during cold weather emergencies.

- Dress in layered clothing and wear some sort of head covering
- Check space heaters for sufficient ventilation and wire condition
- Never place space heaters close to flammable objects, such as drapes or bedding, or on top of furniture or near water
- Check extension cords for breaks or fraying
- Do not use charcoal or gas grills indoors
- Check on your neighbors — **especially the elderly**
- Keep your pets inside
- Never use an electric generator indoors, inside the garage, or near the air intake of your home because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning
- Insulate walls and attic
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows
- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside
- Insulate any water lines that run along outer walls to prevent freezing
- Service snow-removal equipment
- Have your chimney and flue inspected
- Install easy-to-read outdoor thermometer



- Prepare your home and car for cold weather – safety kits are available

Before a winter storm hits:

- Have a week's worth of food and safety supplies
- Keep a water supply
- Make sure you have at a battery-powered AM/FM radio or emergency weather radio — with spare batteries — in case there is a power failure

Listen to emergency broadcasts and know winter storm warning terms:

- Winter weather advisory (Expect winter weather conditions to cause inconvenience and hazards)
- Frost/freeze warning (Expect below-freezing temperatures)
- Winter storm watch (Be alert — storm is likely)
- Winter storm warning (Take action — the storm is in or entering the area)
- Blizzard warning (Seek refuge immediately! Snow and strong winds, near-zero visibility, deep snow drifts, and life-threatening wind chill)

Much more cold-weather related information is available at these Web sites:

emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/factsheet.asp
www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/needtoknow.asp
emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/links.asp
www.redcross.org/services/disaster/

About Missouri 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a fast, free and confidential way to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 2-1-1 call centers operate under national standards and are staffed by trained specialists who quickly assess the callers' needs and refer them to the help they seek.

Information is available on a broad range of services, including food banks, affordable housing, health resources, child care, after-school programs, elderly care, financial literacy and job training programs.