

# ELDER NETWORK NEWS



Quarters 3 & 4 2022

*"Those 55 and better and their caregivers have the opportunity to thrive and lead rewarding lives."*

## A Note from Kathy



We have turned the page to another new year-2023-and Elder Network is celebrating! Elder Network was established in 1988 and we have now been in operation for 35 years! We have started off our celebration with a refreshed website. Our upcoming classes and events are easy to find on the front page, along with our newsletters and latest news. Our Facebook posts are viewable on the front page where we tell stories and share pictures of volunteers and clients. We have pictures of our management team and bio's so everyone can get to know us better. We also have a robust resource section and many other upgrades. Please visit [www.elder-network.org](http://www.elder-network.org) and let us know what you think! We are also planning a big celebration to commemorate 35 years at our Fall Fling Gala which is set for September 23rd, 2023-save the date!

I am happy to introduce the newest member of our team, Danelle Lawson. Danelle is our Program Manager for Winona County, joining us in December. See page 5 to get to know Danelle.

Our Respite Companion program has been so important to helping our elders stay in their home and live safely-and with a good quality of life. We say thank you to all our Companion staff for all they do, and recognize two of our Companions who have achieved their 10 year anniversary with Elder Network! Congratulations to Janie and Ivan!

## Thank You for Your Service!

Elder Network celebrates the 10th Anniversary of two Companions, Janie Capelle and Ivan Zenker. Janie shared how she realized the importance her work as she supported many clients over the years in emergency scenarios when she was their only point of contact in the day/week. She was able to assist them in getting emergency medical services quickly and provide emotional support. She also benefits from their company, sharing "I learn something new about almost all aspects of life from each one of them." Ivan also shared this sentiment, stating, "The connections have been important. They each have their own stories. That's what makes life interesting." Ivan still works with some clients he has known through his ten years of working with Elder Network! Thank you both for your faithful service with clients over the years!



I was honored to receive the Mayor's Medal of Honor Award in the Senior/Elder Achievement category on December 1st along with many others who are doing wonderful things in our community. **Thank you Major Norton!**



**Join Elder Network's legacy of service. Leave your legacy!**  
**Give a gift to Elder Network!**  
**[www.elder-network.org](http://www.elder-network.org)**

## Friendly Visitor Program

***100% of Friendly Visiting clients reported decreased loneliness.***

Call today if you or someone you know faces loneliness and could use weekly visits! We can offer in-person, phone, or virtual meetings. **Call Kathy at 507-285-5272 to sign up!**

## Chronic Conditions Support Group

If you have a chronic condition such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, chronic pain, etc. then you can join us in-person on the 2nd Wednesday, and/or online on the fourth Wednesday, from 1-2pm. **Call 507-285-5272 to sign up!**

## Transportation

Elder Network (Olmsted County only) provides rides for mobile seniors to health-related appointments such as doctors, dentists, vision and hearing checks, physical therapy, counseling, support groups, and health classes. **Non-medical rides are available** on a limited basis.

Clients must be able to get in and out of a vehicle independently, and they will need to go through an initial intake before a ride can be scheduled. Rides must be scheduled at least one week in advance.

**Call Donna at 507-285-5272**



## Caregiver Support

Are you caring for a spouse or parent? Whether caring local or long-distance, we now offer an online caregiver tool. Please contact Holly today for more information on Trualta: **507-285-5272.**

**Olmsted Caregiver support groups** meet the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month, at Elder Network, from 1:00-2:30 pm. **See page 5 for more class options!**

### Elder Network can help:

- Companions can assist with tasks inside and outside of the home, such as light housekeeping, grocery shopping, errands, and transportation to appointments.
- Volunteer Respite for caregivers.
- Caregiver Supports: peer-peer or 1:1 coaching.
- Caregiver Coaching and Family Meetings.

## Powerful Tools For Caregivers

### A class for family caregivers of older adults

This workshop is designed to help you take care of yourself while caring for an older relative or friend. Over a period of 6 weeks, this workshop will help you develop stress-reducing skills, communication tools, and increase positive self-talk.

We have both virtual and in-person classes coming up in 2023. Please call **507-285-5272** to get on our class list and learn more.

***Would your church or civic group like to sponsor a class? Call us!***

## Resource questions? Our Advocate has answers!

Senior Advocates are experienced social service professionals who provide information, referrals, and assistance to seniors and their caregivers. These specialists can often help with Medicare health insurance counseling, assisting with completing forms and applications, connecting to home services in the area, and navigating systems for long-term care services and supports. **Remember our Advocate is an Aging Eyes Partner and can do assessments for Low vision needs.** Caregivers receive information and referrals to make their way through this demanding season of life.

These specialists can often help—even if you aren't sure exactly what you need.

**This is a free and confidential service.**

**Schedule an appointment today!**

Olmsted County: **507-285-5272 (office)**

Email: [katej@elder-network.org](mailto:katej@elder-network.org)



Here to help

## Updates from Our Staff Members

### Kate Jirik-Olmsted County Senior Advocate Caregiver Respite and Supports

More than 15 million adults aged 65+ are classed as economically insecure, with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level. In these challenging economic times, there are many resources in our communities that can aid these seniors to cut costs. Local utility companies can aid home owners and renters through energy weatherization and Energy Assistance programs that help to reduce out of pocket costs for energy each month. The Rochester community has many organizations supporting those that struggle with food insecurity as well as the Senior Nutrition Program (S.N.A.P.). Soc. Sec. has Low Income Supports to reduce healthcare and drug costs too.

Kate can help you to determine what programs you might qualify for, please call **Kate at 507-285-5272**.



Caregiver Respite and Supports are still being offered in Dodge, Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona County. Caregiver Respite (in-home) provides relief for the caregiver to complete out-of-home tasks, confident that their loved one is with a competent respite caregiver. Volunteers are still needed to support our mission! We created a new position for Dodge County Caregiver Outreach Assistant, and are currently hiring for this part-time position. Caregiver Coaching is a goal-focused process of assisting individuals to improve personal and professional achievement. Support groups and educational workshops have proven to be a wealth of support and resources, as well. In-person or virtual options available. If you are interested in volunteering or in receiving these services, please call **Holly at 507-285-5272**.



### Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service. This new benefit provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. So if you have internet service in your home, this could mean a \$30 deduction from your bill each month.

Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers. Eligible households can enroll through a participating broadband provider or directly with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) using an online or mail-in application. You can learn more about the benefit, including eligibility and enrollment information, by visiting [www.fcc.gov/ACP](http://www.fcc.gov/ACP), or by calling 877-384-2575.

Feel free to contact Kate if this is something you want to apply for and do not know where to start.

**Call Kate at 507-285-5272**

### Technology Assistance Program

Ten iPads will be added to our Technology Assistance Program (TAP) in the next 4 months. We have been anxiously waiting to add to our collection so we can share the opportunity to learn basic iPad skills with more seniors in our community. In 2000, 14% of those over 65 years were internet users, now 73% are. Older adults are embracing technology more than ever. TAP helps seniors learn and use technology so they can live better in the digital age. Participants in the TAP program meet with an experienced, trained volunteer weekly for an hour, in their own home. Basic iPad skills and activities chosen by the client are introduced; such as email, online shopping, video chat, reading books and newspapers, listening to music and watching movies, leisure activities, church services, and participating in online workshops and classes. Some concerns we can work to address include the following: "I am afraid of being hacked. How can I safely use the internet?" "I need help remembering phone numbers and names of my favorite places." "I get so many pictures/emails, I lose track of where they are. Help." "The screen on my phone seems to be getting smaller. I'm having a difficult time reading the small print and tapping the correct key." "Email takes a long time for me to complete. I wish I could just say what I want to communicate with my family." If you are interested, please **call Donna at 507-285-5272, today**.





## Holly's Caregiving Advice for the New Year

This is the time of year, many of us make New Year's resolutions or focus on what we want to accomplish or try in the years to come. For some, this may only last a few weeks or months, but I would like to encourage you to think in terms of "baby steps" or small changes that lead to a bigger goal. They say we can't eat the whole elephant in one bite, yet most of us try to change our habits or behaviors in drastic ways. Reaching any goal, takes preparation and being realistic about *what we can do* and *when we can* accomplish it. Setting smaller, more realistic steps will enforce our "can do" attitude and build our self confidence and self worth. Meeting your goals shouldn't leave you feeling like you're sacrificing other obligations, but allowing yourself

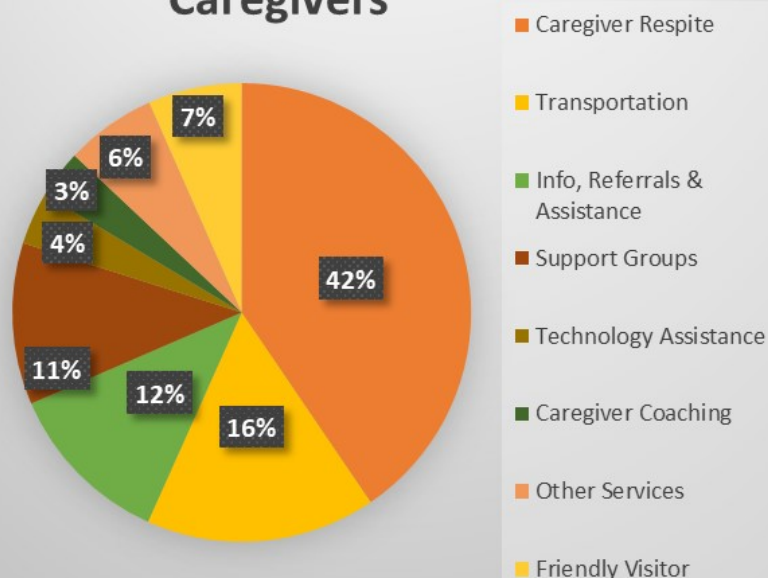


time to find balance in your life which allows for a more enriched life without regrets. Caring for others can be both rewarding and demanding, knowing how to balance your time is the key to enduring any activity that requires longevity. If you're feeling isolated or need a "tribe", we are here to help. We have a number of support services that might be exactly what you are looking for. Contact your local office to learn more today: **Dodge & Olmsted at 507-285-5272, Wabasha at 651-565-3237, or Winona at 507 452-0580.**

## 2022 Elder Network Service Results

Elder Network Provided **22,808 hours to 2,001 participants in 2022**. This past year was a very busy year, and we broke down the numbers for you to show you where we put these 22,808 service hours. Here's what our clients have had to say: "Elder Network's services have helped me to build a virtual community when I 'see' some of the same people in various virtual classes. They helped me prioritize creative activities that improve my quality of life, exponentially;" "I was feeling overwhelmed and stuck with life issues. Talking and planning and setting goals with Elder Network staff helped me get unstuck and move forward;" "I cannot begin to express how much I appreciate having a Companion come into our home!" "Housekeeping has been a must as I often cannot do a lot;" "I would not be able to afford to go to medical appointments without Elder Network Transportation." Thank you to all of our staff, and our incredible volunteers, for your efforts!

### 2022 Review of Services Delivered to Seniors and Caregivers



#### Clients Shared in This Year's Annual Survey:

- ♦ "The Transportation drivers have all been so friendly and caring. I enjoy them all."
- ♦ "I know that I am not alone."
- ♦ "The Technology Assistance Program has been and continues to be a source of education in computer knowledge-and an antidote to isolation!"
- ♦ "I am in good hands and I love it!"

#### Our 2022 Survey Results Show:

- ♦ 100% of clients surveyed in the Friendly Visitor Program said that having a weekly visitor decreased their feelings of loneliness.
- ♦ 100% of clients learned what they set out to achieve in the Technology Assistance Program.
- ♦ 100% of clients who received help with medical insurance, now understand their health insurance and Medicare benefits better.
- ♦ 100% of surveyed clients now understand their options for living in the community and using services to support their decision to do so.

### Wabasha County News



Things are humming along in Wabasha County! We are getting more referrals for Friendly Visiting and Companions than we have in a long time! Thus, we have more demand for volunteers and companion staff than we have had for quite some time. I would love to talk to anyone interested in investing 1-4 hours per week in another person's life, as a volunteer.

We just celebrated our first anniversary of our Memory Café in Wabasha. It was a lot of fun! We have been joined now with high school students that help us and slowly, but surely, caregivers and their care receivers are finding out about us! We meet every 2nd Thursday of the month at the United Church of Christ in Wabasha. Come join us sometime! We are sponsored by SEMAAA and the Senior Action Team of Wabasha.

Also on the horizon for us, is starting another caregiver support group in Lake City in 2023! Any caregivers that would like the extra support whether it's in a caregiver support group or one-on-one coaching, we are now able to accommodate around the county! We are currently hiring Companions, as well, who can serve Lake City, Wabasha & Plainview.

#### **Wabasha Caregiver Support Group Meetings**

Our ongoing caregiver support group meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday from 10:30 a.m.–12:00 pm at Faith Lutheran Church in Wabasha.

#### **Wabasha Memory Cafe**

Our Wabasha Memory Café meets at the United Church of Christ on the 2nd Thursday of the month from 1-2pm. This group is for those with dementia, and caregivers are welcome to accompany seniors.

#### **Plainview Caregiver Support Group Meetings**

Our ongoing caregiver support group meets every 3rd Thursday from 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m at the Plainview Community Center.

For more information, please email or call:

**Bonnie Sandberg at 651-564-0351**

**Email: [bonnies@elder-network.org](mailto:bonnies@elder-network.org)**

### Winona County News



Meet Danelle Lawson-our new Winona Program Manager.

Danelle lives with her husband and 4 children. She has a BS in Addiction Studies and an AAS in Cosmetology. This summer, she will be returning to school to obtain her certificate in

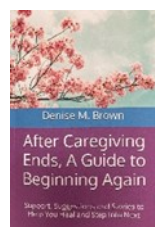
Nursing Home Administration. She owned her own salon and then moved into the mental health field where she worked in residential housing for 9 years. Most recently, she was the Executive Director of a home health agency. Danelle shares, "Every path I've taken has led me to helping people and I am excited to work with seniors at Elder Network."

#### **Virtual Caregiver Support Group Meetings**

Our ongoing Caregiver Support Group offered via Zoom (**all counties of service are welcome**) meets every Wednesday from 10:30 a.m.–12:00 pm.

Our in-person **Caregiver/Senior Support Group** is not currently meeting. Please reach out to Danelle if you would like a safe outlet to discuss your caregiving journey (507-452-0580).

#### **"After Caregiving Ends, Now What" Support Group**



This grief support group for people that have lost a loved one meets every Monday via Zoom from 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Join us as we work through our grief together (**all counties of service are welcome**).

#### **In-Home Help through Companion Care**

Companion care service are available in Winona County, serving seniors wherever they live with social interaction, light housekeeping, help with grocery shopping and cooking meals, and transportation. Elder Network provides Respite service so that the caregiver can take several hours to themselves to get things done, knowing their care receiver is in good hands.

#### **Friendly Visitor**

Friendly Visitors provide a visit weekly (1 hr.) visit- either in-person or over the telephone. Friendly visitors provide much-needed relief from isolation. For more information or to sign up, please contact **Elder Network at (507)-452-0580 or email [danellel@elder-network.org](mailto:danellel@elder-network.org)**.

## ***We Say: THANK YOU!***

We have been extremely grateful to the people and organizations that have stepped forward to support us during these uncertain times.

### **Anonymous Organizational and Individual Gifts**

Bethel Women of the ELCA

Blooming Prairie Farm Radio Inc.

Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation (Gold Gala Sponsor and Grant)

Congregational Church UCC (Friend Gala Sponsor)

First Alliance Credit Union (Friend Gala Sponsor)

Hawkins Ash CPA's (Bronze Gala Sponsor)

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Slaggie Family Foundation

Think Bank (Grant and Silver Gala Sponsor)

United Health

United Way of Goodhue, Wabasha, & Pierce Counties

United Way of Olmsted County

Wagner, Oehler, Ltd. (Bronze Gala Sponsor)

Winona Community Foundation

Zwingli United Church of Christ

### **We are Hiring**

Do you have a passion for working with older adults and their families? Elder Network has an immediate opening for a Friendly Visitor Coordinator in Olmsted County. Approx. 10-15 hours/week. Responsibilities include client intakes, training/supervising volunteers, and community networking. Prefer degree in nursing, social work, or other human services area. Past experience working with elderly population and caregivers preferred. Flexible hours. Send resume attn. Executive Director, at [info@elder-network.org](mailto:info@elder-network.org) or mail to Elder Network, 1130 1/2 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW #205, Rochester MN 55901

### ***Gifts in Honor***

*Robert & Teresa Minkema in honor of Ron Strong & Holly Brown*

*Nancy Hintz in honor of Kathy Karls*

*Rick Baier in honor of Gordy Hall*

*Paul & Kay in honor of Kate and Holly*

*Terry Thul in honor of David Woltman*

*Gretchen Porter in honor of Arvilla Reichel*

Elder Network is part of Thrivent Choice Dollars. If you are a member of Thrivent and have Choice Dollars to designate, please consider Elder Network, Rochester MN.

Would you like to donate through direct deposit? Elder Network can make that happen for you. Please call Kathy at 507-285-5272 to discuss this giving option.

Are you an Amazon shopper? Did you know by shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) you can designate Elder Network for a donation from Amazon at no cost to you? **This program ends February 20th, 2023.**

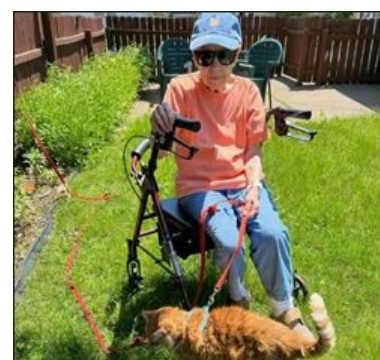


Kyle shared with volunteers in the Technology Assistance Program about the iPad's accessibility features. We are looking for volunteers, and expanding the program to include additional clients. The best recommendation for this program is to try it, you will be amazed by what you will learn to do in 30 minutes and by the opportunities available in this lightweight, portable tablet. ***"I felt the world was passing me by, but now I feel I'm a part of it again."***

## Elder Network thanks you for your support!

### ***Individual Donors***

Mary Boyne  
 Pat Cristofferson  
 Joe & Jan Connell  
 Robert Fiss  
 Shirley Hultz  
 W. Charles Huskins & Diana M. Carey  
 Cindy Swessel-Hofer  
 Dennis & Judy Johnson  
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 Bruce Wendorf  
 Therese White  
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### ***Memorial Gifts***

David Gathje in memory of Marlys Gathje  
 Colm Fitzmaurice in memory of Jim Fitzmaurice  
 Peter & Becky Langhus in memory of Edith Ann Jensen  
 Delores & Geoff Washa in memory of Edith Jensen  
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 Sharon Haack in memory of Valentine Kellam  
 Rob Artley & Sharon Austin in memory of Lori Colwill  
 Susan W. Bailey in memory of Beatrice W. Wagner

**“Elder Network makes my  
 life more livable!”**

***To find out more about leaving a gift in your will,  
 making a memorial gift, or a gift in someone’s  
 honor, call 507-285-5272.***





1130 1/2 7th St. NW, Suite 205  
Rochester, MN 55901-1732  
Web site: [www.elder-network.org](http://www.elder-network.org)

**Rochester office:**  
507-285-5272

**Wabasha office:**  
651-564-0351

**Winona office:**  
507-452-0580



**Supported by:**



If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or know of someone who would like to be added to our mailing list, please call us at 507-285-5272.

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#### Drivers Wanted

Safe drivers are wanted to transport seniors in Olmsted County. Flexible scheduling during days!

#### Friendly Visitors

Spend 1 hour on the phone or in-person, per week, to help a senior feel less isolated.  
Volunteers needed for Winona, Lake City, Plainview, Wabasha, St Charles, and Rochester.

#### Event Volunteers

Assist Elder Network with planning and hosting our Gala. Volunteers are needed for a variety of roles: planning, publicity, and "on-the-day" helpers.

#### Technology Assistance Program

Many of Elder Network's clients are learning to use technology to maintain social connections and access telehealth appointments. *Volunteers needed in Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties.*

#### Caregiver Respite Volunteers

Volunteers devote 2-3 hours to supporting a caregiver in completion of daily living activities. Volunteers offer active conversation, play games, make a favorite treat, or go for a ride. Interested volunteers can work out arrangements according to their schedule to accommodate the needs of clients on an independent basis.

#### Companions

We are seeking individuals who are passionate about working with seniors to assist with light housekeeping, errands, meal preparation, etc. *Paid Companions are needed in Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties.*