



# THE INFORMER



*Helping older adults and adults living with disabilities discover resources to plan, prepare for, and support living independently for as long as possible.*

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*Check out our website for more resources and information!*

[Click Here](#)

## A MESSAGE FROM ALTCEW

Welcome to our first issue of **The Informer!**

Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) is thrilled to launch a biannual digital newsletter with our first summer issue. Inside the issue you will find information about agency updates, resources, and local services. **(Cont. on page 2)**

## STAYING COOL THIS SUMMER!

We are quickly rolling into the month of July, and hot weather is coming despite our wet spring weather. While summer weather can be beautiful and fun to enjoy, it is important to know how to keep yourself cool. Some people are at higher risk for heat-related illness, such as people 65 years and older, **(Cont. on page 3)**



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 7/4: Holiday—office closed
- 7/10: Neighbors in Need Homeless Connect
- 7/13: Medicare Related Cost Savings
- 7/18: World Refugee Day
- 7/20: Medicare Getting Started
- 7/28: Spokane Tribe Wellness & Career Fair

**(Message from ALTCEW cont. from pg. 1)**

Through providing this resource, we hope to build a stronger connection with the community and communicate valuable information.

“Our agency is thrilled to start publishing The Informer community newsletter! This newsletter helps us in reaching our mission by providing another means for the public to access local resources and services. Thank you to all who read this issue, please feel free to share it around. We’ve included a wide variety of features to enjoy.” – **Savannah Reams-Taylor, Community Outreach Specialist**

Aging & Long Term Care is the Area Agency on Aging for Eastern Washington. We help older adults and adults living with disabilities discover the resources needed to plan, prepare for and support living independently in Spokane, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, and Whitman Counties. For additional resources and information, visit [altcew.org](http://altcew.org).

As a biannual newsletter, issues will be released twice yearly, each summer and winter. Issues will be distributed digitally and posted on our [website](http://altcew.org). The next issue will be released this winter of 2022.

We welcome all feedback and questions about any of the information provided in the newsletter or suggestions on topics you would like featured in future issues. To contact us, subscribe or unsubscribe, email [marketing@altcew.org](mailto:marketing@altcew.org).



## Contact our Helpline for FREE Support!

**509-960-7281**

Do you need assistance accessing services or supports in our region? Contact ALTCEW’s helpline ran by the Community Living Connections department Mon—Fri, 8:30 AM—5 PM.

Staff answer calls live and can assist with screening, locating resources, answering questions, and providing referrals to programs and services. Our helpline is not a crisis line. Please contact emergency services with urgent needs.

### *Dear Aging & Long Term Care...*

*“I’ve been receiving a TON of robocalls and scams and need to know how to block these. Could you please provide some resources or information about how to manage these incessant and obnoxious calls!”*  
- PLEASE HELP!

### *Dear Please Help,*

*Robocalls are a becoming a huge issue for many individuals. Billions of robocalls hit American cell phones every month and this has only been increasing the last several years. Many of these are illegal or scams and can greatly impact affected individuals. Your best defense against unwanted calls is **call blocking and call labeling**. The type of technology you use will depend on the type of phone you have. To learn which type of call blocking or labeling technology to use, head to the Federal Trade Commission’s webpage on blocking unwanted calls. [Click here](#).*

*Write and submit your own question to Dear Aging & Long Term Care at [marketing@altcew.org](mailto:marketing@altcew.org).*



***(Staying Cool continued from page 1)***

children up to the age of 4, and people who are ill or on certain medications. How can you and the family beat the heat this summer? Here are some suggestions on how to stay cool in hot weather!

**Beat the heat!**

- Drink plenty of water or fruit and vegetable juices throughout the day to stay hydrated.
- Dress for the weather. Choose loose, light-weight, and breathable fabrics and cooler colors. Choose linen or cotton over synthetics.
- Take advantage of opportunities to keep cool in the community like public pools, libraries, or community centers.
- Limit time outdoors or plan outdoor exercise for cooler times of the day. Be careful about exercising or doing a lot of activities when it's hot. Stay out of the sun, take frequent breaks, drink water or juice often and watch for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Cool down by eating a popsicle or running through the sprinkler! Enjoy a watermelon basil popsicle recipe on page 4.
- Embrace the shade.
- If you live without fans or air conditioning, open windows to allow air flow, and keep shades, blinds or curtains drawn in the hottest part of the day or when the windows are in direct sunlight. Cool showers can help. Do not use a fan when the air temperature is above 95 degrees - it will blow hot air, which can add to heat stress. [SNAP](#) is providing air conditioner repairs and free fans!

Now there's warm weather, hot weather, and then there's extreme heat! "Extreme heat is a period of high heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two to three days. In extreme heat your body works extra hard to maintain a

normal temperature" – [ready.gov](#).

Extended exposure to high heat could result in heat exhaustion with symptoms ranging from dizziness, weakness, nausea, or lack of coordination, and could turn into heat stroke, which is life-threatening and requires immediate medical help. Health officials also warn that the temperature inside a parked car can reach more than 120 degrees in as little as 10 minutes. Direct sunlight and dark-colored interiors speed the process. Children and animals should never be left in a parked car, even for a few minutes even with the windows open. Lock parked cars to prevent children from playing in them, and it's advised to leave pets at home even for short trips.

To learn about symptoms of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and how to treat it, visit the Spokane Regional Health District's website, [srhd.org](#), where the following resources are available:

- [Extreme Heat Overview and Basics](#)
- [Guidance for Outdoor Activities in Excessive Heat](#)

Although we are ready for the summer warmth, the rain is appreciated to help decrease the drought rating and dampen the forests in the short term. However, it has also helped the wild grasses flourish. As the region dries out later in the summer, these grasses could become fuel for wildfires. June is a good time to prepare for wildfire smoke. There are simple steps you can take now to prepare such as creating a clean air room, having an N95 mask on hand, and upgrading your home's air filters. Check out [Spokane Regional Health District's "Smoke Ready Week" blog \(srhd.org\)](#) on keeping yourself and others safe during wildfire season to prevent illness and stay healthy.

You can find additional resources on extreme heat at [ready.gov/heat](#), and information on hot weather safety and wild fires at the [Department of Health's severe weather and natural disasters webpage](#).



Thank you to the [Spokane Regional Health District](#) for providing resources and information to help guide this article.

## CONSUMER DIRECTED EMPLOYER PROJECT

*By: Jennifer Lichorobiec, Case Management Director*

Starting in 2018, the Washington State Legislature signed into law the establishment of the **Consumer Directed Employer**. There is a contract between the **Department of Social and Health Services** and **Consumer Direct of Washington (CDWA)** to become the Consumer Directed Employer. CDWA will serve as the employer for Individual Providers (IP) of in-home personal care and respite in Washington state. They will handle the credentialing, payroll and other employer responsibilities currently managed by the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration, Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Area Agencies on Aging. Individuals will continue to select, schedule, supervise, and dismiss their IPs.

The move to a Consumer Directed Employer (CDE) model shifted the IP employment-related duties to CDE and helped DSHS realize the goal of increasing the capacity of case management, customer service, and allowing staff to focus on other social services activities. Case management and other staff will have more time for assessment, service planning, service plan monitoring, and working with participants to support activities to maintain their health and wellbeing. Individual Providers will now work with a single entity for payroll, tax reporting, and credentialing among other concerns. This entity will have a sole focus and expertise on the IP workforce.

Starting in November, 2021 information went out to all clients receiving In home care services and current Individual Providers about the Consumer Directed Employer. Then work was done to transition all current IPs to be hired on with CDWA. Effective 4/1/2022, all current IPs are now employees of CDWA.

If a client receiving In-home Care Services on the Community First Choice (CFC), CFC+COPEs, MPC or RCL Programs wants to hire an Individual Provider (including family members) they should contact their Case Manager who can give them more information.

### How to Reach Consumer Direct of Washington:

Website: [www.consumerdirectwa.com](http://www.consumerdirectwa.com)

Phone number: 1-866-214-9899

Email address: [infocdwa@consumerdirectcare.com](mailto:infocdwa@consumerdirectcare.com)

## Cool Down by Eating a Popsicle!

It was the best way to cool down when you were a kid, and nothing has changed. Cool down by eating a popsicle!

*Try these basil watermelon popsicles, adapted from Williams-Sonoma and beat the heat!*



### Ingredients:

- Handful of freshly grown basil
- 1/2 seedless baby watermelon, peeled and flesh cut into large chunks

### Directions:

1. Juice the basil and watermelon in an electric juicer according to the manufacturer's instructions.
2. Stir the juice with a spoon.
3. Working in batches, pour the juice into the wells of an ice pop mold and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions.

**Makes 8 pops!**



## Community Living Connections at Aging & Long Term Care

*Welcome to the Community Living Connections (CLC) department! Who are we?*

CLC is a department within Aging & Long Term Care that can connect you with the right kind of help, when and where you need it. We help older adults, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers access a wide range of public and private resources and provide the long-term care services and supports necessary for individuals to remain in the community for as long as possible.

**Please contact our helpline at 509-960-7281** for **FREE**, objective, confidential information about community resources and service options to meet your individual needs. **Here is what you will find in the CLC:**

### Information and Resource assistance:

- Staff answer calls to our helpline live M - F, 8:30 - 5PM and assist with screening, locating resources, offering information, and providing referrals to programs and services. They have access to an extensive resource database. Our helpline is not a crisis line. Please contact emergency services with urgent needs.

### Application assistance:

- Technology barrier? Need help correctly applying for benefits? Our Benefits Enrollments Specialists assist with the completion of any needed applications, including food stamps, long term care, rental/utility assistance, property tax exemption, and more.

### Options counseling and specialty assistance:

- Counselors provide short term assistance to seniors and those with a disability needing support to remain safely and independently in their homes. They help navigate systems and supports for in home care assistance, ensure homes are equipped for safety, and supply resources needed to achieve goals. If someone cannot remain at home, they will assist in accessing benefits and resources to find placement in a facility.
- **Housing assistance:** We are housing people in need! With the current housing market, one of our Options Counselors is a housing specialist. This staff member remains current on local resources and assists clients that don't always qualify for other housing assistance. Contact our helpline for support.
- **Dementia Care Work:** We now have a Dementia Care Specialist focused on assisting clients and their caregivers who are navigating memory loss. We are also working within the community to increase awareness to better support this population. Learn more on page 10.

### Check and Connect:

- Check and Connect is a volunteer based program that provides social connection to those that are socially isolated or homebound during the pandemic. Volunteers connect with clients on a weekly basis to socialize and provide referral assistance if a need arises. Learn more about this program on page 6.
- This program is looking for additional volunteers! Learn about this opportunity on page 14.

### SHIBA:

- SHIBA is our Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors working to assist those on Medicare to find appropriate coverage and answer Medicare questions. They are the only free, non-biased Medicare assistance organization in the state. Please see their article on page 7 for more information.

*CLC wishes everyone a safe and happy to summer!!*

## Healthy Aging Includes Falls Prevention

By: Kathy Hill, MOB Master Trainer

Aging is for everyone, and healthy aging includes falls prevention—especially for older adults. No one wants to fall, and a bit of prevention can be a boon. While you're active this summer at home, in the garden, at the lake or wherever, please be aware of potential fall hazards and plan how you can prevent falls while staying active and enjoying life.

If you've not already done so recently, you can start by checking your risk for falling by answering 12 quick questions either online using the National Council on Aging's Falls Free Checkup ([click here](#)) or on paper using the Stay Independent brochure from the Centers for Disease Control ([click here](#)). Both options are free. From there you can plan steps you want to take to safeguard yourself without crimping your style.

**ALTCEW offers two great falls prevention programs proven to reduce fall risk. These programs are FREE to adults age 60 and older.**

**A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns about Falls** is a class (eight 2-hour sessions in person or nine online) for groups of 8 to 12 older adults who want to reduce their fear of falling by raising their awareness about fall risk factors (potential causes) and strategies they can implement to safely increase their activity level.

**FallsTalk** through ALTCEW is a series of phone calls with a trained facilitator in which an older adult can explore his or her ideas and options to reduce losses of balance and risk of falling. This year within its FallsTalk program, ALTCEW is to pilot a version for persons with memory loss and their family caregivers. In this version, a facilitator works with the person and their caregiver.

This autumn, **Falls Prevention Awareness Week** (FPAW, September 18-24), will be another perfect time to explore strategies older adults can use to prevent falls as seasons change. ALTCEW will be an active participant in this nationwide effort to raise awareness on preventing falls and reducing fall risk. Watch for resources shared on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) in September.

Remember, **falling is not a normal part of aging**. For more information about either of these programs or general support preventing falls, contact the falls prevention unit at ALTCEW: 509-458-2509 or [action@ALTCEW.org](mailto:action@ALTCEW.org)

## Check and Connect!

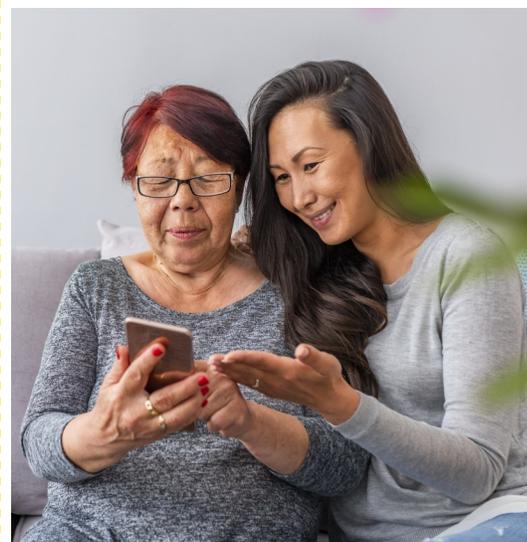
**Sign up for Check and Connect to receive weekly wellness checks!**

Check and Connect is a program at Aging & Long Term Care that provides regularly scheduled phone calls to clients who want to reduce feelings of isolation during the pandemic and beyond. Their goal is to support clients and ensure needs are being met.

This is a volunteer based program. Volunteers call clients weekly to verify their well-being, share friendly conversation, and refer individuals to available resources if needs arise.

This **FREE** program hopes to not only help reduce victimization and health concerns, but also isolation.

There are no requirements to join besides being an older adult or adult living with a disability. If you are interested in having regular conversations, reducing isolation, and learning about available resources, call our helpline and ask for the program coordinator **509-960-7281**.



## Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors

*By: Monica Kudrna, SHIBA Coordinator*

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) SHIBA program is part of the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner's consumer protection services. We are sponsored locally by Aging and Long Term Care.

The SHIBA program provides FREE, unbiased, and confidential help with Medicare and the healthcare choices available within the Medicare program.

Our advisors are volunteers who have been through extensive training about Medicare. They provide one-on-one counseling for quite a few things. **Some of the services that advisors provide include:**

- Assessing healthcare coverage needs
- Determining eligibility for healthcare coverage programs
- Evaluating and comparing health plans and programs
- Providing enrollment with Medicare
- Speaking with 1-800-Medicare on a client's behalf
- Collecting and reporting possible fraud complaints

SHIBA advisors also provide public educational presentations on Medicare, Medicare preventive services, Medicare fraud, and programs that help pay for the cost of Medicare. They participate in health fairs and special events as well.

For one-on-one counseling with a SHIBA advisor call **509-625-4801** for an appointment.

## Caregiver Support

Are you caring for a relative or friend — your grandma, a cousin, or somebody else who needs your help with care? There is free or low-cost help for you. **Contact our helpline at 509-960-7281 to learn more.**

Being an unpaid caregiver to a relative or friend can be rewarding, but also isolating, draining, and physically demanding. **The Caregiver Support Program** is offered to unpaid caregivers supporting loved ones who are 18+. This program can help you gain access to free or low-cost support.

### Services include:

- Support groups and counseling
- Caregiver training
- Respite care, if you need a break
- Purchasing supplies and/or medical equipment
- Other services necessary to help the unpaid caregiver

### Living Alone and Need Help?

If you are 55+ and have trouble with things such as bathing, dressing, walking, etc., and don't have a caregiver, please contact us at **509-960-7281** for help.

## Well Connected

"In this time of separation, Well Connected and Well Connected Español are here for you—to provide laughs, intellectual stimulation, inspiration, conversation and more, all via groups you can join from home, by phone or online." - [Well Connected](#)

Well Connected is a virtual community offering phone and online activities. This program builds a community through games, group conversation, and education. Well connected offers a wide variety of activities for topics such as health & wellness, bingo, book clubs, tech & culture, science, and lots more!

**For more information about Well Connected:** [Click Here](#)

**For the Well Connected Spring & Summer Program Guide:** [Click Here](#)



## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Aging & Long Term Care

*By: Aging & Long Term Care's DE&I Committee*

In 2021, with the advice and direction of **Lynn Kimball**, Executive Director, **Kari Stevens**, CLC Director, and **Peggy Chapel**, HR Coordinator, ALTCEW recruited a group of volunteers among employees to start a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. This committee was created to start the hard conversations, provide access to training for staff, address policy changes, and make diverse community connections.

### What exactly is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I)?

- **Diversity:** is the way that people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. That includes identity markers such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and more. Diversity is often boiled down to a people's perception when they walk into a room and say, "people look different."
- **Equity:** is "the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Equity is centered on fair treatment, such as any group of individuals' access, opportunities for advancement, and feeling like they are growing in the organization."
- **Inclusion:** is "the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people." Inclusion goes beyond diversity, because once you have a diverse team, organizations must focus on valuing individuals. Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.

This committee is made up of three work groups. Policy and Hiring, Training and Education, and Community Outreach. **Our committee's goals are to:**

- Support and welcome difference of cultures, individuals of all identities, racial and ethnical backgrounds for equal potential to access the same resources for growth and success.
- Implement and support inclusive policies and practices.
- Create an action plan for how to provide staff with the resources needed for change.
- Openly discuss race in order to identify and address the barriers to equity and inclusion.
- Identify and understand why diverse employees may be unhappy or struggling.
- Understand that DE&I does not refer to only race and gender differences, but systematic inequality that needs to be addressed.

Over the last year, Aging & Long Term Care has spotlighted the pursuit of DE&I in our agency. Although DE&I work is never truly complete, it is imperative that this work is consistently progressing. **(Cont. on page 9)**

*(DE&I continued from page 8)*

In particular, we will be looking into ways that we can more equitably support employees, clients, volunteers, and members of our community.

### **What exactly have we done since our creation in 2021?**

- Conducted an agency wide Needs Assessment Survey to determine our largest gaps and greatest needs as an agency in our DE&I efforts.
- Expanded our outreach materials to include more diverse and culturally relevant content.
- Reviewed hiring policies and interview procedures to promote equitable and inclusive practices for all applicants.
- Adjusted job posting language to be more inclusive.
- Created a DE&I statement (see below) that has been posted on our website and shared with staff members to demonstrate our commitment to building an inclusive, varied workplace welcoming all.
- Have begun offering trainings for staff regarding DE&I topics and will continue offering trainings relevant to the needs and gaps expressed in the Needs Assessment Survey.
- Provide regular training opportunities through webinars and helpful resources to staff members.
- Started forming community connections with diverse organizations to connect clients to trusted sources and provide support to their communities.
- Have started encouraging the use of pronouns to ensure inclusivity, for example in email signatures and business cards.

While there has been lots of work done already, there is still lots of work to do. To be successful with this mission, we have to be patient, encouraging, and forgiving. Topics such as race, politics, and religion should no longer be avoided and require everyone's participation to build the skills necessary to start the conversations for a more productive, supportive, and inclusive workplace. The goal is better teamwork, productivity, and engagement.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

***ALTCEW endeavors to embrace and promote a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion in our workplace and community. We demonstrate this commitment by seeking out and listening to diverse viewpoints, looking intentionally and critically at data, and using feedback to improve policies, services, and practices to be inclusive and equitable.***

***We strive to be a safe and productive environment that promotes a sense of fairness and belonging for our staff and the community we serve.***

***We foster a workplace where everyone feels welcome to be their authentic selves.***

# BRAIN HEALTH CORNER

## Become a Dementia Friend!

*By: Anessa Boyer, Planning Coordinator*



ALTCEW is actively seeking community members who are interested in learning more about dementia and becoming Dementia Friends, as well as those who would like to share the message with others by becoming trained as a Dementia Friend Champion.

Did you know that 120,000 people aged 65 and older in Washington are living with dementia? This number is predicted to continue to grow, and with it must grow the resources we have in place to help those living with dementia.

One way ALTCEW is supporting this mission is through [Dementia Friends USA](#), a global movement that is changing the way people think, act, and talk about dementia.

***You can join the movement by attending a one-hour information session (offered virtually or in person) to become a Dementia Friend!***

This information session will demonstrate what it is like to live with dementia, and then show you how to turn your understanding into action. From telling your own network about the Dementia Friends program to visiting someone who is living with dementia, every action counts. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend – we all have a part to play in creating a dementia friendly community!

If you are interested in setting up a Dementia Friends info session or Champion training for yourself, your workplace, church or hobby group, etc., or would simply like to learn more about Dementia Friends, contact **Anessa Boyer** at [Anessa.boyer@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Anessa.boyer@dshs.wa.gov) or **509-458-2509 ext. 335**.

## Joy for All Robotic Pets

*By: Teri Koski, Dementia Resource Catalyst*

**ALTCEW has two new mascots:  
Smokey and The Bandit!**

**Smokey** is our cat, and **Bandit** is our dog. You might be thinking, “Pets in the office? When did THAT happen?” Well, I have to confess: Smokey and Bandit are **Joy for All robotic pets**.

Joy for All robotic pets are meant to be an assistive device that offers comfort and companionship for anyone experiencing changes in how their brain works. I learned about the animals as a tool for individuals affected by dementia, but they could also be suitable for people with developmental delays, mental health diagnoses, trauma survivors, or anyone that would like the comfort of a pet but can’t—or doesn’t want to- care for one.

The pets are a product of Ageless Innovation, and began with the goal of inspiring adults to “play”. After interest in the robotic pets became widespread, ten separate independent studies were done to measure the efficacy of the pets in reducing loneliness and social isolation, and how they supported individuals with dementia and their caregivers. All of the studies found common threads of success across the board. The pets not only reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation, they also assisted in reducing difficult behaviors, improved cognitive activity, and helped the individuals feel a sense of purpose.

The pets have sensors on them, and are covered with realistic feeling fur. They are also just pretty cute to look at! They react based on voice activation and physical touch. In petting Smokey I have heard her meow, purr, and roll over in a manner similar to a real cat. Bandit has barked, turned his head to follow my voice, and will whimper a little bit if he’s being ignored.

***(Cont. on page 11)***

## BRAIN HEALTH CORNER

*(Robotic Pets continued from page 10)*

All that's missing is the knocked over flower vase and the pooper scooping!

For qualifying clients that have access to Community First Choice or Copes funding, these pets can be purchased through state funding via their case manager.

If a client is eligible for Older American Act funding and meets additional criteria, they can also qualify for a pet at no cost to them. For the general public, the animals are available for sale online at various companies for between \$100 to \$125, typically.

As humans, we crave that interaction, attention and love that only a pet can give. We enjoy seeing our dog greet us when we come home from work, or having our cat "allow" us to pet it. Pets like Smokey and Bandit allow individuals to experience that love and joy from a pet in a way that doesn't create a burden of care on them or their caregivers. As a robotic pet caretaker, I can attest that Smokey and Bandit love the work they do, and very much enjoy helping their community.

If you have further questions about the AAA Joy for All robotic pets, please contact [Ageless Innovation](#) online, or contact Teri Koski at [teri.koski@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:teri.koski@dshs.wa.gov).



### June was Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month

*With early detection, you have options for living with memory loss*

As we age, many of us experience some memory loss. Forgetting things once in a while is a normal part of aging. But memory loss that disrupts daily life could be a sign of something more serious, like dementia or other health problems. Dementia is not one specific disease. It's a broad term for an impaired ability to remember, think or make decisions. For many of us, it's a frightening word. But identifying your symptoms and potential causes can make a big difference in your life and in your family's life over time.

You can visit Aging & Long Term Care's news webpage for information on early detection and resources for people living with memory loss and their care partners. [Click here](#).

### How to Access Dementia Support in Eastern Washington?

Visit the Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community website:

[www.altcew.org/about-who-we-are/spokane-area-dementia-friendly-community/](http://www.altcew.org/about-who-we-are/spokane-area-dementia-friendly-community/)

Visit the WA State Alzheimer's Association website:

<https://www.alz.org/alzwa?set=1>

Contact Aging & Long Term Care's helpline Mon - Fri, 8:30 - 5PM to reach a Dementia Care Specialist:  
(509) 960-7281

Contact the Alzheimer's Association's 24/7 helpline:  
1-800-272-3900

Subscribe for the Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community biannual newsletter:

Email [dementia@altcew.org](mailto:dementia@altcew.org)

## SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

*By: Anessa Boyer, Planning Coordinator*

National Preparedness Month is approaching this September! Living in Spokane County, as with any area, comes with some risk for natural and man-made disasters. This area has seen extreme temperatures, forest fires, power outages, earthquakes, and a novel pandemic just to name a few.

### What you can do to be prepared:

- Educate yourself! Order disaster preparedness guides and checklists through [FEMA](#), which are free and available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish.
- Observe a presentation from the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), a collaborative of organizations and volunteers in Spokane County that work together to “prioritize ongoing response actions and identify recovery strategies.” You can contact COAD via telephone at 509-477-3046.
- Register for [ALERT Spokane](#), a mass notification system that will send alerts via cell phone (both texts and calls), landline, and email. Registration can be done via [spokanecounty.org](#).
- Store important documents (passports, birth certificates, wills, deeds, etc.) in a secure location such as a safety deposit box or a safe to prevent their loss or damage in the event of an emergency.
- Keep an emergency kit in your home and vehicle. Premade kits can be purchased through the Red Cross or through many online stores, or you can make your own. Items can include but are not limited to bottles of water, a first aid kit, nonperishable food items such as granola bars, a space blanket, batteries, and flashlight.
- Create and practice a family communication plan that include meeting locations, emergency contacts, and family members’ roles during various crisis situations. Templates for family communication plans can be found on [ready.gov](#).
- Practice situational awareness- observe emergency exits and pay attention to the environment you are in and the people you are around.

Of course, no amount of preparation can prevent most disasters from occurring but taking proactive measures ahead of time can certainly help to ensure your safety when something does happen. For additional information and resources, consider exploring [ready.gov](#), [fema.gov](#), and [emergency.cdc.gov](#).

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Our Vision is to provide the best home and community based services to support healthy living and aging in place.

- \* We Listen... to our community to understand individual needs.
  - \* We Adapt... to our changing world.
- \* We Provide Solutions... using innovative services to improve quality of life.

### **We Provide Assistance Accessing Nutritional Food and Meals!**

Do you need meal delivery to your home?  
Could you use help affording fresh fruits and vegetables? Are you looking for places near you that serve meals?

**Call our helpline at [509-960-7281](tel:509-960-7281)**

## Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment Starts Oct. 15

*By: Monica Kudrna, SHIBA Coordinator*

For the more than 1.3 million Medicare beneficiaries in Washington state, this is an important time of year. Medicare's Open Enrollment Period – also called the Annual Election Period – runs each year from October 15th to December 7th.

### During this time, those on Medicare:

- Can switch from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan – and vice versa.
- With Original Medicare can join, drop or switch a Part D prescription drug plan.
- With a Medicare Advantage plan can switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan.

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) program – part of the Office of the Insurance Commissioner - is ready to help with all of these decisions. Medicare is not a one-size fits all program. Each person's needs, situation and benefits are different – and that includes spouses who may have their own unique Medicare plan.

### Before you make a final decision, consider these tips:

- Plan costs and coverage can change every year, so review and keep all letters and notices your current plan sends you.
- List all of the current prescription drugs you take, the doses, and how often. Then, use the Plan Finder at [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) to compare Part D plans.
- Review the Medicare & You handbook. You should receive it by mid-October.
- If you have questions, call SHIBA before you sign up.
- Attend a SHIBA workshop (check out our online events calendar at [insurance.wa.gov/shiba](https://insurance.wa.gov/shiba))

**To schedule your one-on-one counseling appointment with a SHIBA volunteer, call your local SHIBA office at 509-625-4801  
Monday - Friday, 8:30 - 5 PM.**

## Consider a Career With Us!

*Make a difference at  
Aging & Long Term Care!*

Our agency is regularly hiring to fill a variety of positions to support the work of our vision, providing the best home and community-based services to support healthy living and aging in place.

At Aging & Long Term Care, we are a community working together to promote well-being, independence, dignity, and choice for all older adults and individuals needing long-term care. Employees have regular opportunities to actively pursue wellness and foster employee health through socializing, volunteer opportunities, utilizing our Employee Assistance Program, and getting out of the office.

Our agency is an equal opportunity employer, seeks diverse and bilingual staff members, and makes reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities upon request.

**To learn more about careers and benefits, [click here.](#)**



# Volunteer With Us!

## Make a difference with SHIBA

Are you searching for a rewarding volunteer experience in Spokane or Whitman County?

### Consider joining the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA).

If you speak English and another language, have computer skills, and you're committed to helping others with Medicare – make a difference today! Become a SHIBA volunteer.

SHIBA is a free public service offered by the Office of Insurance Commissioner, more than 400 SHIBA volunteers statewide provide free, confidential, and unbiased counseling and education in their local communities.

Learn more about volunteering with SHIBA [online](#), or Call **Monica Kudrna**, SHIBA Program Coordinator at **509-458-2509 ext. 339**.



## Check and Connect on Seniors

### Volunteer for our Check and Connect program!

Check and Connect provides regularly scheduled phone calls to clients who want to reduce feelings of isolation during the pandemic and beyond. Our goal is to support individuals and ensure their needs are being met.

Our team of volunteers call clients weekly to verify their well-being, talk with them, and refer them to available resources. Volunteers provide regularly scheduled phone calls to reduce isolation, volunteer remotely, and determine the hours they work. This program hopes to not only help reduce victimization and health concerns, but also isolation.

### How to Volunteer?

For further information or to apply, contact the program coordinator at **509-960-7281** or head to our [website](#).

## Help Prevent Falls in our Region

Chances are you know somebody who has fallen or who is afraid of falling. A Matter of Balance is a program intended to help people manage concerns about falls and increase physical activity.

### We are looking for volunteers to assist in leading this program.

“A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls” is conducted in 8 two-hour sessions (9 for the online class) and uses group discussion, problem-solving strategies, videos and gentle physical exercise. Older adults learn positive coping methods to reduce fear of falling and remain active and independent.

This program relies on volunteers—coaches, guest health care professionals, and navigators.

To learn more about volunteering to help empower older adults to avoid falls and their consequences, please call **509-458-2509** or learn more [online](#).

## Serve on our Planning & Management Council

### Help us achieve our mission by serving on our Planning and Management Council (PMC)!

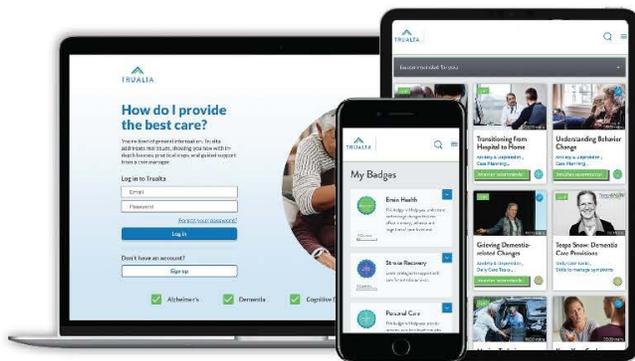
PMC volunteers provide agency oversight, collaborate with staff for planning and program development, advocate for those with the greatest social, economic and health needs, and much more. PMC members attend monthly meetings and have opportunities to discuss leading information about issues facing older adults and people living with disabilities in our community.

Learn more about volunteering with our PMC on our [website](#).



## Access free training and resources to help you build skills and confidence to provide care at home.

Trualta is an online platform designed to help families build skills to manage care at home for their aging loved ones. Improve confidence, reduce stress and prevent burnout by learning care skills. Once you are registered, you have unlimited access to their articles and tips about caring for your loved one.



***“This was wonderful. My husband and I danced and we had a good time singing these oldies but goodies. I will highly recommend these to anyone who’s husband or wife has Alzheimer’s.”***

- Pat from "Alzheimer's Music Connect"

Trualta is really easy to use. All you will need to start is a computer, tablet, or smartphone. With lessons ranging from 5 minutes to 2 hours, Trualta makes it easy for you to fit caregiver training in whenever it works for you.

Sign up for FREE at:

[WACaregivingJourney.com](http://WACaregivingJourney.com)

Scan me with your camera to visit!

