

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!*
www.altcew.org

A MESSAGE FROM ALTCEW

Welcome to the winter 2023 issue of **The Informer**.

Happy Holidays, hope you are enjoying the season! For tips on how to stay safe and warm this winter, visit our previous [winter 2022 issue of the Informer](#). If needing support this winter, call our helpline at **(509) 960-7281** to speak with a staff member.

ADOPT A NEIGHBOR

This winter, Aging & Long Term Care has started a community initiative to assist older adults and individuals with disabilities with snow removal, “Adopt A Neighbor!” Winter can be a beautiful season, but it can also bring challenges, especially for older adults and individuals living with disabilities. **(Cont. on pg. 2)**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 12/25: Holiday—office closed
- 1/25: Spokane Homeless Connect
- 1/1: Holiday—office closed

Full Calendar of Events: altcew.org/news-events/event-calendar

(Adopt a Neighbor, Cont. from pg. 1)

Shoveling sidewalks and driveways can become an arduous task, and for some, it's dangerous or not possible. That's where "Adopt A Neighbor" comes in.

Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) is looking for compassionate groups in Spokane, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Ferry, and Whitman Counties willing to lend a helping hand to those in need.

"Adopt A Neighbor" is a community-driven effort designed to assist seniors and individuals with disabilities during the snow season.

Here's how it works for the 2023-2024 winter:

- **Volunteer Participation:** ALTCEW is seeking groups such as clubs, organizations, businesses, churches, community centers, and schools willing to adopt one or more older adults or individuals with disabilities in their community.
- **Resource Allocation:** Each participating entity decides how many community members they can adopt and support.
- **Referral Process:** When ALTCEW receives a call from someone in need of snow removal assistance, they will provide you with the individual's contact information.

- **Direct Communication:** All communication and coordination will happen directly between you and the neighbor you adopt. This personal touch fosters a sense of community and care.
- **Flexible Commitment:** Your commitment can be as flexible as you decide. Once you've adopted as many individuals as you can accommodate, ALTCEW will stop referring new neighbors to you.
- **How to Get Involved:** If your group is interested in participating in "Adopt A Neighbor" and making a meaningful impact in your community, please reach out to Aging & Long Term Care. You can contact us at action@altcew.org or (509) 960-7281 to express your interest and get started.

"Adopt A Neighbor" is an opportunity for our community to come together and support those who may need a little extra help during the winter months. By participating, you not only provide a valuable service but also strengthen the bonds of compassion and solidarity within our neighborhoods. Let's make this winter season a little warmer for our seniors and individuals with disabilities through "Adopt A Neighbor."



WINTER IS COMING

ADOPT A NEIGHBOR

Snowy sidewalks shouldn't be a barrier.
 'Adopt A Neighbor' - bridging gaps and building stronger, more inclusive communities.

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH SNOW REMOVAL?

If you need assistance with snow removal this winter, contact our helpline and speak with an individual to see about available support:
(509) 960-7281

Aging & Long Term Care Joins Home for the Holidays, A National Campaign Encouraging Older Adults To Get Vaccinated

By: Savannah Reams-Taylor, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

Spokane, Washington — To help older adults stay healthy this winter season, Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington is participating in Home for the Holidays, a national campaign led by the Eldercare Locator and USAging. This year's campaign connects older adults, caregivers, and families with information on vaccinations.

Staying up to date on vaccinations is a vital part of healthy aging. Vaccines serve as a safe and reliable defense against serious illness, protecting the health of individuals, their loved ones, and others in their community. This is especially true for adults aged 60 and older, as aging gradually weakens immune systems and makes older adults increasingly vulnerable to numerous illnesses.

A new Home for the Holidays brochure, [Start Your New Season of Wellness: A Guide to Vaccinations for Healthy Aging](#), and a [vaccine fact sheet](#), highlight the important and potentially life-saving role vaccines play in helping older adults stay healthy. And they connect older adults to local, community-based resources that can help them get vaccinated.

“This is a time of year when many people gather with family or friends. To stay healthy, it's important for older adults to get vaccinated against the flu and other diseases. Aging & Long Term Care can share information about vaccines older adults may need and help find services, such as free vaccine clinics, transportation if needed, in-home vaccinations, and onsite consultations with health care professional. For older adults, finding a vaccination appointment can be as simple as giving us a call or visiting our website at (509) 960-7281 [or www.altcew.org/news-events/event-calendar](http://www.altcew.org/news-events/event-calendar),” says **Bethany Osgood, Planning & Resource Director**.

Missed one of our events? Visit your primary care doc, your local pharmacy, or contact one of our partners to learn about more available immunization options:

[NEW Health](#) | [Pond Oreille County Fire District #2 \(pocfd2.org\)](http://Pond Oreille County Fire District #2 (pocfd2.org)) | [CHAS Health](#) | [Prevention NW](#)



**Aging &
LONG
TERM
Care**
OF EASTERN WASHINGTON

www.altcew.org

**Aging doesn't have to mean
losing independence.**

One number connects you to all the services
you need to age at home.

(509) 960-7281



Why Get Vaccinated for the Flu or COVID?

As reported by the Northwest Healthcare Response Network, as of June 2023:

- ⇒ 139 patients were hospitalized with COVID
- ⇒ 11 patients were ventilated

With the flu or COVID, getting vaccinated protects yourself and others.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

*By: Savannah Reams-Taylor, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator
with details from [211](#) and the [Greater Spokane County Emergency Management](#)*

When we talk about natural disasters, we often envision the aftermath of earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and the like. Eastern Washington has recently faced its share of these calamities, impacting our region significantly.

Rather than waiting for a disaster to strike, it's crucial to plan ahead. Preparation can mitigate fear, anxiety, fatalities, and property loss. Establishing communication and connections with others—whether they actively contribute to the plan or rely on it—plays a pivotal role in enhancing resilience during such events.

Greater Spokane County Emergency Management recommends these steps to be prepared in an emergency:

- Build a Kit:** Having a “go bag” in case of emergencies doesn't need to be expensive or complicated. Have a spare backpack with a few bottles of water, non-perishable food, a can opener, a change of clothing (season appropriate), a flashlight with extra batteries, a phone charger, first aid kit, and sanitation supplies (toilet paper, wet wipes, etc.).
- Have a plan:** Planning is a part of building your resiliency as a family, and sometimes can seem daunting, so try and make it fun. Thankfully there are many organizations such as [Ready.gov](#) and the [Red Cross](#) that have taken the guess work out of the how to plan by providing templates.
- Stay Informed:** How will you and your family stay up to date on what's happening during a disaster? Do you have a portable phone charger? We recommend having multiple options ready to go in case there are community disruptions in communication. One way to ensure you get notifications about disasters in your area is to sign up with [Alert Spokane](#).
- Get Involved:** In times of an emergency or natural disaster, First Responders (law enforcement, firefighters, medical response services, and utility companies) are under a lot of pressure to resolve issues as quickly as possible. In some situations, they count on the assistance of trained volunteers from a variety of programs such as DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team) or Spokane County Search & Rescue.



A Caregiver's Wisdom: Five Pieces of Advice From Experience

*Article from [GetSetUp](#). Visit [5 Heartfelt Tips from a Caregiver Who's Been There \(getsetup.com\)](#) for the entire article.

We understand the challenges and rewards of the caregiving journey. We're excited to share insights from Nancy Hardaway, an experienced caregiver.

There's a saying that resonates with many on their caregiving journey: "To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors." However, caregiving is not only fulfilling but also one of the most challenging responsibilities a person can take on, often without any prior training or preparation.

Nancy Hardaway knows this all too well. She was a caregiver for her husband for more than 11 years when he was diagnosed with Multiple System Atrophy — a rare, progressive, terminal neurodegenerative disease with no treatment and no cure. She also helped care for her aging mother and disabled sister. Through all the ups and downs, Nancy gathered helpful tips and learned valuable lessons, like:

- **Stay Present:** Find joy in daily moments.
- **Acknowledge Reality:** Empower yourself by recognizing the responsibility of caregiving.
- **Combat Burnout:** Prioritize mental and physical well-being.
- **Accept Help:** Embrace vulnerability and allow others to share in the journey.
- **Expand Your World:** Rediscover yourself amid challenges.

Another helpful tool was the [Road Scholar Caregiver Grant](#) that helped provide Nancy with some relief in her journey!

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.

Volunteer

**Consider volunteering with
Aging & Long Term Care!**

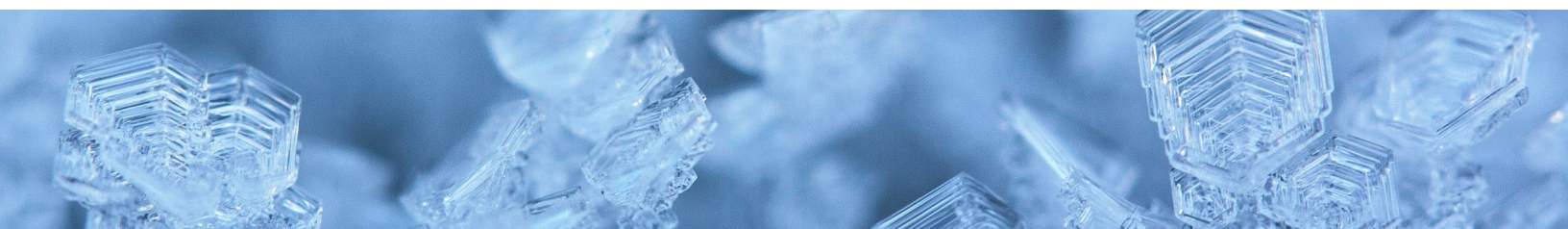
Our agency is regularly looking for volunteers for a variety of programs! At Aging & Long Term Care, we work together to promote well-being, independence, dignity, and choice for all older adults and individuals needing long-term care. **To learn more about opportunities, visit our volunteer page ([altcew.org](#)).**

Stay Active and Engaged

Interested in learning how you can stay active and engaged as you age?

Check out these resources through [engAGED](#):

- ⇒ [Stay Active Through Volunteering](#): "What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good." — Aristotle
- ⇒ [Stay Active with Intergenerational Connections](#): "Whether we're a preschooler or a young teen, a graduating college senior or a retired person, we human beings all want to know that we're acceptable, that our being alive somehow makes a difference in the lives of others." — Fred Rogers
- ⇒ [Stay Active Through Lifelong Learning](#): "I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious." — Albert Einstein
- ⇒ [Stay Active Through Technology](#): "As soon as you feel too old to do a thing, do it." — Margaret Deland



Online Security for Older Adults

By: Amanda Stevens, ALTCEW Office Assistant



With new technology also comes new and creative ways to have your information stolen, and it can be difficult for anyone to know how to navigate around it all. Most of the younger generations grew up surrounded by constant reminders of internet safety, but that isn't usually the case with anyone born before the 1980s.

Knowing that there are people out there trying to trick you can make the internet seem intimidating, so here are some internet safety tips to help you out:

- **Keep Personal Information Limited:**

A lot of scammers will try to “phish” you. A slang term coined back in the 1990s, “phishing” is the act of acquiring sensitive data (such as bank account numbers, social security numbers, birthdates, etc.) through fraudulent solicitation via email, text, and websites. During these “phishing” attempts, the perpetrator will pose as someone you trust, such as your bank, social media sites, or even friend and relatives.

When in doubt, ignore these requests or get verification. For companies, this can mean calling them (ignoring any phone numbers or contact information on their email) and asking if the email is legitimate. For personal contacts including relatives and friends, this can mean calling them on their personal phones or messaging them through another avenue. If they seem at all suspicious, ask them something that they should know and if they seem cagey or defensive about it, then end the conversation there.

Without confirmation, it's not safe to give out any kind of personal information. This includes your address, date of birth, passwords, social security number, credit/debit card numbers, and bank account numbers.

- **Ignore Emails You Weren't Expecting**

As a general rule of thumb, don't trust anything that you weren't expecting. Just scheduled a doctor's appointment? The confirmation email asking you to check-in and confirm your information is probably fine. An email for a website you've never used saying that your password has been compromised? That is a bright red flag and should be deleted immediately. *(Cont. on pg. 7)*

(Online Security, Cont. from pg. 6)

- **Don't Respond to or Click on Pop-Up Windows on Your Phone or Computer**

Screen pop-ups are another way to scam older adults. A common pop-up ploy is “scareware”. This is a malware (bad computer scam technique that uses pop-up security alerts and other tricks to frighten you into downloading or paying for fake software disguised as real cybersecurity protection. How does scareware work? An “urgent” pop-up window appears on your computer or phone, telling you that your device is compromised and needs repairing. When you call the support number for help, the scammer may either ask for remote access to your computer or request a fee to fix it.

Another malware technique is to use deceptive “Close” or “X” buttons, which automatically install a virus when you click on them. If you’ve accidentally downloaded scareware onto your device, delete the downloaded file immediately. It’s also a good idea to install genuine antivirus software that can remove any harmful remnants of the malware.

Internet safety is important, but it doesn’t have to be stressful. Awareness is a powerful first step in protecting yourself. Also, if you think you’ve been the victim of an online scam or cyber-attack, be vocal about your experience. You’re not alone—and there’s no reason to feel embarrassed about what happened. Immediately contact your local police and your financial institution if money has been taken from your account. You can also report the scam online to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Some additional resources for online safety:


- ⇒ [Online Safety for Older Adults: Browsing the Internet Confidently](#)
- ⇒ [Online Safety for Older Adults: Protecting Your Personal Information Online](#)
- ⇒ [Online Safety for Older Adults: Socializing Safely Online](#)

New Local Resource— Spokane Area Dementia Road Map & Resource Directory

Navigating the journey of memory loss just got easier! The Spokane Regional Dementia Friendly Community (SRDFC) created a local road map and resource directory for people living with memory loss and their caregivers.

The resource list is currently available online and for print at the following link: www.altcew.org/programs-services/dementia-memory-loss

This resource was compiled and released earlier in 2023 to share available services and supports in our region. This comprehensive list has current and relevant resources, and the online version will be updated regularly. The more we can make individuals aware of these services and supports, the better we can serve our community.



**SPOKANE REGIONAL
DEMANTIA FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY**

SPOKANE AREA DEMANTIA RESOURCE LIST

Learn about the new road map and resource directory for people living with memory loss and their caregivers. To find this helpful new tool, visit the link below!

VISIT FOR LOCAL RESOURCES → ALTCEW.ORG/PROGRAMS-SERVICES/DEMANTIA-MEMORY-LOSS

EMAIL WITH QUESTIONS → DEMANTIA@ALTCEW.ORG

 Dementia Friendly America.

Health Homes — A Client Success Story

By: David Donally, Health Homes Supervisor

Health Home is a program within Aging & Long Term Care that empowers individuals to take charge of their own health care through person-centered health action planning. Care Coordinators work with participants to establish health-related goals, increase their confidence and skills to manage these goals, access health care services, and much more.

Recently, a 63-year-old client enrolled in the Health Home Program named Laura, agreed to meet with me for a chance to tell the story of her last 3 years. We met in her rented home on a late October afternoon. Halloween decorations guard her gate, ready for the coming of trick or treaters. Inside, her 3 cats are curious and offer the occasional comic relief as Laura shares some details and feelings about her journey from being sick and homeless to how she is doing now.

To learn more about this program or how to apply for services, visit our website:

www.altcew.org/programs-services/care-coordination

David: Tell me the story of how you got started with the Health Home program.

Laura: 3 years ago, I got a phone call from Jenna Hernandez. COVID had just started and I was homeless and had just gotten out of prison. Now Jenna is almost like family to me. I know I can call her when I am frustrated about something, and she helps me through it. I am not big on liking people, it's not that I dislike people, I just like to be by myself and be left alone and not bothered.

David: Did you have much hope that someone could help make a difference in your life when you first heard from Jenna?

Laura: Absolutely not! But I was like, "I am sick, I am dying, who cares?" I was just released from prison, I had stage 4 renal failure, diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis in my knees and hips. It started with Jenna just talking and checking in with me, helping me through my medical stuff, then my health started improving a little bit. I got my blood sugars under control, which actually helped with my kidneys. But I was not big on telling people I was homeless at the time.

David: Where were you staying at the time?

Laura: Wherever. I stayed with my friend, with my son who lives here in Spokane for a little while, but that was dysfunctional for me. I had to consider my mental health too, I have bipolar disorder and Post Traumatic Stress, I am just a crazy old lady. So, I finally told Jenna, "I am homeless."

David: Why did you feel that you needed to not tell people that you were homeless?

Laura: Because (through tears) do you see the way people talk about homeless people out here? It's like if you're homeless you're no good, you're worthless...it's horrible. And so, if you don't let anybody know then they can't put you in that category where they say things like "Oh look at those people at Camp Hope they're worthless drug addicts and they're this and they're that." It's amazing how many people I see out here that are homeless, but people don't know they're homeless. Because not all homeless people are drug addicts and not all of them are out there doing stupid stuff. I was doing stupid stuff before I was homeless, that is how I ended up in prison.

(Cont. on pg. 9)

(Health Homes Interview, Cont. from pg. 8)

David: So, it was a like a “coming out” to Jenna about being homeless knowing there might be a possibility of getting help with housing, but at a risk of being judged and you had to trust her not to, is that right?

Laura: By that time, I trusted Jenna. She shared a resource that helps with housing (ALTCEW’s Supportive Housing Program), but I expected it to be a long time. Everyone told me it would be a long time, but it ended up being just a few months and I had a voucher.

David: How is it managing your health now that you are sustainably housed?

Laura: It is so much easier, so much better. I got my diabetes totally under control, my A1C is down to 6.2, a year ago it was 13. I have lost 60 pounds. I went from stage 4 to stage 3 renal failure thanks to keeping my blood sugar under control. I am having good success with the once a week shot that helps me stay consistent in managing my diabetes.

David: How has meeting with Jenna helped your health get better?

Laura: She is there for me as support; moral support. You get to the point where it feels like nobody cares. But with Jenna, she cares. Whenever I have a question or concern, she is there to support me. She encouraged me to get my eye surgery when I was doubtful. Before that I was basically blind in one eye. I can see now. Jenna is a huge, uplifting type of support. She helps me believe that I can do it. I now have my diabetes and blood pressure under control, I am not homeless anymore, and it is all because Jenna helps me push myself. She does not push me; she helps me push myself.

David: You have been successful with those things that you have put your mind to. What is next for you?

Laura: Last week I met my latest goal of getting my 3 cats spayed and neutered. I found a resource for free help through Spokanimal to make that happen. It is called Lucky Funds. My next goal is based on the wrapping up the carpentry on the house I am living in. She (landlord) buys the stuff and I get people to do it. She pays them if they want to get paid, but most the people are friends of mine and they just come in and do it for free. But I am doing the kitchen. I have some “Fresh Avocado Green” paint picked out for the walls and the cabinets. I am hoping to have it all done by the 1st of the year.

David: What does success mean to you?

Laura: Success to me is that I can be open with what I am doing and not have to hide what I am doing (or not doing or should be doing). When someone asks me how I am doing, I don’t have to be careful what I say, I am free to share because I am not hiding anything.



Staying Active as You Age

**Article and Image from the CDC, [click here for the original article & additional resources for staying active.](#)*

As an older adult, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can prevent or delay many of the health problems that seem to come with age. It also helps your muscles grow stronger so you can keep doing your day-to-day activities without becoming dependent on others.










Keep in mind, some physical activity is better than none at all. Your health benefits will also increase with the more physical activity that you do.

Adults aged 65 and older need:

- At least **150 minutes a week** (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) of moderate-intensity activity such as brisk walking. Or they need 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity such as hiking, jogging, or running.
- At least **2 days a week** of activities that **strengthen muscles**.
- Plus activities to **improve balance**, such as standing on one foot.

If chronic conditions affect your ability to meet these recommendations, be as physically active as your abilities and conditions allow.

Sample Weekly Schedules: Here are some ways to meet the physical activity recommendations.

<p>Example 1</p>  <p>Moderate-intensity aerobic activity</p> <p>(such as brisk walking) for 150 minutes (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week)</p> <p>AND</p>  <p>Muscle-strengthening activities</p> <p>on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).</p> <p>PLUS</p>  <p>Balance activities</p> <p>Walking heel-to-toe or standing from a sitting position.</p>	<p>Example 2</p>  <p>Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity</p> <p>(such as jogging or running) for 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) every week</p> <p>AND</p>  <p>Muscle-strengthening activities</p> <p>on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).</p> <p>PLUS</p>  <p>Balance activities</p> <p>Walking heel-to-toe or standing from a sitting position.</p>	<p>Example 3</p>  <p>An equivalent mix of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity</p> <p>on 2 or more days a week</p> <p>AND</p>  <p>Muscle-strengthening activities</p> <p>on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).</p> <p>PLUS</p>  <p>Balance activities</p> <p>Walking heel-to-toe or standing from a sitting position.</p>
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Active People, Healthy NationSM is a CDC initiative to help people be more physically active!

Learn more about this initiative, the costs and benefits related to physical activity, and become a part of a movement helping 27 million Americans become more physically active. Everyone can be involved, visit their page to see ideas on what you can do.

BRAIN HEALTH CORNER

10 Warning Signs of Dementia Is it time to talk to your doctor?

By: Tara Hill-Matthews, Dementia Resource Catalyst

While it is common to experience some changes as we age, memory loss that affects daily life is not a normal part of aging.

Below are 10 signs that you or your loved one may be starting to experience symptoms of dementia. These should not be used as a diagnosis. However, you may want to talk to your doctor if you are experiencing one or more of these signs.

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood or personality



These signs can look different in everyone who experiences them and are usually indicated by a change in behavior. For example, if someone has baked cookies regularly for years and suddenly forgets how to use the mixer, this could be a warning sign. You do not have to experience every warning sign to be concerned – you may want to schedule an appointment with your doctor even if you only recognize one.

It is normal to feel nervous about discussing these changes. However, it is important to get a diagnosis early in order to have the widest range of treatment and clinical trial options available and to have the chance to plan for the future.

You can learn more about the 10 warning signs by:

- Visiting the Alzheimer’s Association’s website here: [Memory Loss & 10 Early Signs of Alzheimer’s | alz.org](https://www.alz.org/memory-loss-10-early-signs)
- Calling our Dementia Care Specialist at (509) 960-7281

How to Access Local Dementia Support in Eastern Washington?

Visit Aging & Long Term Care’s website or call the helpline Mon - Fri, 8:30 - 5PM:

www.altcew.org | (509) 960-7281

Visit the WA State Alzheimer’s Association website or contact their 24/7 helpline:

www.alz.org | 1-800-272-3900

Visit the Spokane Regional Dementia Friendly Community website and subscribe to their newsletter:

www.altcew.org/spokane-regional-dementia-friendly-community