

FEBRUARY 2026

THE SOURCE

COUNCIL ON AGING



Live Well. Age Well.

711 Marshall Street, Suite 100

Leavenworth, KS 66048

Phone: 913.684.0777

Fax: 913.684.0779

Transportation: 913.684.0778

In this issue:

- ♦ Random Acts of Kindness Day
- ♦ National Heart Month: Taking Action to Protect #OurHearts
- ♦ Meet Chew Bear: A Gentle New Friend at the Council on Aging
- ♦ Kansas Adult Protective Services
- ♦ New COA Activity: *Let's Be Handy*
- ♦ Leavenworth Senior Rebate Program
- ♦ VITA Tax Program
- ♦ Low Income Energy Assistance Program Update



Our Programs

Chore Assistance

Errand & Shopping Support

Information & Assistance

Legal Service

Leisure & Learning Program

Nutrition Program

Pets & Loving Seniors Program (PALS)

Pet2Vet Program

Prescription Drop Off

Senior Health Insurance Counseling

Social Services

Support Groups

Telephone & Visiting Support

Senior Express Transportation

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY: FEBRUARY 17



Share with us your random acts of kindness on our [Facebook page](#) on February 17th. Help share ideas and make kindness the norm.

Taking Action to Protect **#OurHearts**

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States – 1 in 5 people die from it each year, even though it is largely preventable. Research shows that many Americans will likely develop some form of heart disease, but you don't have to be one of them. According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), you can take action by making small lifestyle changes that help reduce your risk and improve your overall health.

NHLBI's The Heart Truth® program encourages you to join the **#OurHearts** movement and take these actions to support a heart-healthy lifestyle:

Eat better. Select nutritious snacks. Try whole fruits, dried fruits, unsalted rice cakes, fat-free and low-fat yogurt, or raw vegetables. Use herbs and spices instead of salt.

Add more movement to your day. Sit less. Take the stairs. Park a good walking distance away from your destination. March in place, or walk around the block. Anything that gets your heart beating counts!

Stop (or don't start) smoking. Make a list of the reasons you want to quit, select a quit date, and talk to a healthcare provider about resources that can help.

Get enough quality sleep. If possible, aim for at least 7–9 hours of sleep each night. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.

Manage stress. Use relaxation techniques that combine breathing and focused attention on pleasing thoughts and images to calm the mind and body.

Maintain a healthy weight. Discuss with your healthcare provider if your weight is in a healthy range. If you need to lose weight, choose healthy foods, get regular exercise, and consider joining a weight loss program.

Control cholesterol. Make healthy food choices, like limiting saturated fats found in fatty cuts of meat, dairy products, and desserts, increase your physical activity, and don't smoke.

Manage blood sugar. Monitor your carbohydrate intake and choose complex carbohydrates, like whole grains and legumes, to help control blood sugar levels.

Control high blood pressure. Get your blood pressure checked at each healthcare visit. Ask your provider if you should monitor your blood pressure at home. Knowing your numbers is an important first step to making sure yours are in a healthy range.

Devote a little time each day to your heart. Remember, self-care is heart care. Ask a family member or friend to join you on your heart-health journey. Personal networks make it easier to stick to heart-healthy habits that can help keep **#OurHearts** healthy for life.

To learn more about how to take action for your heart and prevent heart disease, visit www.hearttruth.gov.

THE COA IS HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

Check out our Leisure and Learning calendar for this month's activities.

- Exercise classes
- Nutrition education
- Support groups
- Social/interest groups
- Games
- And more

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT.	FEATURED EVENTS
2 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Coffee Group 9:00am Move & Groove 10:00am Blood Drive 11:00am Mahjong 1:00pm	3 Cardio Drumming 10:00am Sing-Along Choir 1:00pm Buffalo Trip Drawing	4 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Vitaband Exercise 9:45am Chairside Yoga 10:30am Bingo 1:00pm	5 Cardio Drumming 10:00am Ukuleles Unite 10:00am	6 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Vitaband Exercise 9:45am Mahjong 10:00am Chairside Yoga 10:30am	7 Paint w/Derek 9:00am-12:00pm Learn to Crochet 9:00am-12:00pm	Red Cross Blood Drive: Open to all ages. Make an appointment at www.redcrossblood.org , on the blood donor app, or walk-ins welcome. 11:00am-3:00pm
9 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Move & Groove 10:00am Mahjong 1:00pm Game On 1:00pm	10 Cardio Drumming 10:00am Knowledge @ Noon: Don't Be Sassy What's Next? Loss Support 10:30am Let's Get Sewin' 1:00pm Let's Be Handy 1:00pm Fabric Trip Drawing	11 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Vitaband Exercise 9:45am New Theatre 10:15am Chairside Yoga 10:30am Bunko 1:00pm Caregiver Support Group 2:00pm	12 Cardio Drumming 10:00am Ukuleles Unite 10:00am Sewing on the Line Quilt Guild 1:00pm	13 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Vitaband Exercise 9:45am Mahjong 10:00am Chairside Yoga 10:30am Valentine's Party 1:00pm	14	Knowledge @ Noon: Don't Be Sassy. February is Heart Health Month. We will discuss sodium levels in pre-packaged foods, how to reduce salt usage, and take a look at how salty we really are. No cost; Tonganoxie Library. Let's Be Handy: Are you handy or enjoy working with your hands? Let's Be Handy is a new social group for seniors who want to stay active, learn new skills, and work together on meaningful community projects. All skill levels welcome and no experience required. Tools, guidance, and good company provided. Valentine's Party: Join us for a delicious treat, entertainment, and the crowning of our COA Valentine's Royalty. It will be an afternoon you won't want to miss. \$4 due at sign-up; deadline 2/15. Min 20, max 30.
16 Closed For President's Day	17 Cardio Drumming 10:00am Outreach @ Exchange Bank in Easton 10:00-10:30am Sing-Along Choir- sing out	18 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Vitaband Exercise 9:45am Outreach & Bingo @ West Haven Baptist Church 10:00am Chairside Yoga 10:30am Bingo 1:00pm	19 Mystery Breakfast 8:30am Outreach @ Linwood Library 9:00am Cardio Drumming 10:00am Ukuleles Unite 10:00am Outreach @ Bassett Library 10:30am Bingo @ 11:00am Yarn Connection 1:00pm	20 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Vitaband Exercise 9:45am Mahjong 10:00am Chairside Yoga 10:30am Munchies & a Movie 12:00pm	21	Munchies & a Movie: We will be showing the Olympic themed, romantic comedy, <i>The Cutting Edge</i> . No lunch will be served, but we will have a great intermission with a fun and filling snack. The snack this time will be a chocolate fountain with Olympic rings dipping options. We will also have popcorn and soda. \$5 due at sign-up; deadline 2/15. Min 20, max 30.
23 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Coffee Group 9:00am Move & Groove 10:00am Mahjong 1:00pm Game On 1:00pm	24 Cardio Drumming 10:00am What's Next? Loss Support 10:30am Parkinson's Support Group 1:00pm Let's Get Sewin' 1:00pm Let's Be Handy 1:00pm	25 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Vitaband Exercise 9:45am Chairside Yoga 10:30am Farkle 1:00pm	26 Buffalo Art Trip 9:30am Cardio Drumming 10:00am Ukuleles Unite 10:00am	27 Chairside Yoga 8:30am Mahjong 10:00am Chairside Yoga 10:30am	28	



COUNCIL ON AGING
711 Marshall St., Ste 100
Leavenworth, KS, 66048
913.684.0777

Chew Bear

THERAPY DOG

Meet Chew Bear: A Gentle New Friend at the
Council on Aging

The Leavenworth County Council on Aging is excited to welcome a very special new addition—Chew Bear, our therapy dog. Beginning this month, Chew Bear will be on-site Monday through Friday during regular business hours, offering comfort, companionship, and a warm smile (and tail wag) to anyone who could use a little extra support.



Hachikō Statue- Japan



Helen Keller with
Kamikaze-go

Chew Bear is an 8-year-old American Akita with a calm presence and a heart as big as his paws. He is a registered and insured therapy dog, specially trained to provide emotional support and comfort.

Chew Bear's calm and devoted nature is deeply rooted in the rich history of the American Akita. Akitas are known worldwide for their unwavering loyalty, quiet strength, and deep bonds with their people. One of the most famous Akitas in history is Hachikō, a dog in Japan who faithfully waited at a train station every day for nearly ten years after his owner passed away, becoming a lasting symbol of loyalty and devotion.

In 1937, Helen Keller was gifted an Akita during a visit to Japan, making her the first person to bring the breed to the United States. Keller described the Akita as “gentle, companionable, and trustworthy,” praising the breed's intelligence and emotional sensitivity—qualities that are still celebrated today in therapy and service settings.

Whether someone is stopping by for services, attending a program, or simply having a tough day, Chew Bear is here to listen and to help brighten your day.

Therapy dogs like Chew Bear play an important role in promoting emotional and physical well-being, especially for older adults. Research has shown that time spent with therapy animals can help reduce stress, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness, while also encouraging social interaction. For many seniors, a friendly dog can spark memories, conversation, and connection. Beyond emotional comfort, therapy dogs can also have physical benefits. Petting a dog has been associated with lower blood pressure and heart rate, and brief interactions can lift mood and energy levels. For seniors navigating health changes, grief, or isolation, these small moments of calm and joy can make a meaningful difference.

If you see Chew Bear during your visit, feel free to say hello. Whether you need comfort, a smile, or just a moment of peace, Chew Bear is here to help. We are proud to have him as part of our Council on Aging family and look forward to the many moments of connection he will bring to our community.



ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

APS Mission:

Improving the quality of life for Kansas adults who are vulnerable and in need of protection, through building connections with family and community, fostering independence, promoting advocacy, and enhancing preventative services.

Who is at risk?

Persons at risk are adults 18 years of age or older, who are unable to protect their own interest and who are harmed or threatened. The harm may be financial, mental or physical in nature, through action or inaction by themselves or others. Typically, this includes individuals who are elderly, who are physically disabled, mentally ill and/or have intellectual or developmental disabilities.

What is abuse?

Any act or failure to act intentionally or recklessly that causes or is likely to cause harm, including: infliction of physical or mental injury; sexual abuse; unreasonable use of physical or chemical restraint, isolation or medication; threat or menacing conduct.

What is neglect?

Failure or omission by one's self, caretaker or another person with a duty to supply or provide care, goods or services that are reasonably necessary to ensure safety and well-being and to avoid physical or mental harm or illness.

What is financial exploitation?

Misappropriation of an adult's property or intentionally taking unfair advantage of an adult's physical or financial resources. This includes situations in which a person who is a caretaker of, or who stands in position of trust, to an adult, takes, secrets or appropriates his/her money or property for any use or purpose not in the due and lawful execution of the adult's trust or benefit.

When to report?

A report should be made to DCF when: **(1)** the adult is unable to protect his/her own interest and is in a harmful situation or is in danger of being harmed or **(2)** a specific incident or pattern suggests abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation is occurring or **(3)** the adult is unable to provide or obtain the services necessary to ensure safety and well-being and to avoid physical and mental harm or illness.

Click [here](#)
for more
information
about APS
reporting.

Where and how to report?

Call the Protection Report Center: 1.800.922.5330. If the adult is in imminent danger, call local law enforcement. The name of the person who makes an APS report is confidential and cannot be disclosed without the written consent of the person making the report or through a court order.

Law enforcement investigates concerns of criminal activity. For reporting assistance, contact the COA Human Services Team at 913.684.0733.



LET'S BE HANDY!

A hands-on social group for seniors
who like to build, fix, and create!

**Do you enjoy working with your hands?
Building something useful?
Helping the community while having fun?**

Let's Be Handy is a new social group for seniors who want to stay active, learn new skills, and work together on meaningful projects—like garden beds, birdhouses, community pantry projects, and more. No experience required. All skill levels welcome. Come build friendships—and make a difference.


2nd and 4th Tuesday @ 1pm

 **Tools, guidance, and
good company provided**

COUNCIL ON AGING



 711 Marshall St., Suite 100
Leavenworth, KS 66048

 913.684.0777



seniors1st@leavenworthcounty.gov



www.leavenworthcounty.gov/COA



Senior Rebate Program Available For Those Who Qualify

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FROM
FEBRUARY 1, 2026 THRU APRIL 15, 2026

The City of Leavenworth will waive your monthly sewer and refuse charges for a period of one year if you meet the following qualifications and complete the application process.

In order to qualify, citizens must:

- ⇒ Be a resident of the City of Leavenworth, Kansas.
- ⇒ Be 62 years old or older at the time of application.
- ⇒ Be a primary occupant of a residence with the water bill in your name.
- ⇒ 2025 total household gross income cannot exceed the following:

1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons
\$39,000	\$44,600	\$50,150	\$55,700	\$60,200	\$64,650	\$69,100	\$73,550

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Qualifying residents interested in applying can visit Leavenworth City Hall, City Clerk's Office 100 N. 5th St., now through **April 15, 2026**. To apply, bring the following:

- income verification for the year 2025 from all income sources will be required at the time application is made, i.e. 2025 Income Tax Returns, 2025 Homestead Claim or Social Security Statements and 1099 forms;
- proof of age (birth certificate or driver's license); and
- current water bill (water bill must be in your name).

Take Note !

Documentation
is required at
time of
application.

NOTE: City Clerk staff does not assist with completing tax forms.

Questions, please call 913.682.9201 opt. 9.

For transportation assistance, please contact the COA Senior Express Transportation Department at 913.684.0778, or use the Ride LV Micro Transit. Be sure to allow 2-3 days' notice for transportation services.

APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED AFTER APRIL 15, 2026 WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

As part of the Council on Aging VITA program, residents can also complete a Senior Rebate Program application during their tax appointment. Applications will be taken to the City Clerk's office for processing.

FEBRUARY 2ND - MARCH 31ST

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE VITA

The Leavenworth County Council on Aging VITA Program is ready for the 2025 Tax Season.

VITA Tax preparation is provided by the Leavenworth County Council on Aging to qualifying seniors free of charge. To qualify, you must:

- ⇒ be a Leavenworth County resident,
- ⇒ be 60 years or older, or disabled and
- ⇒ have an income less than \$69,000 with no farm or rental income.
- ⇒ Other restrictions may apply.

About the VITA Program

The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals. The VITA program has operated for over 50 years, and specializes in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

VITA services are not only free, they are also a reliable and trusted source for preparing tax returns. All VITA volunteers who prepare returns must take and pass tax law training that meets or exceeds IRS standards. This training includes maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of all taxpayer information.

To schedule an appointment, call the VITA Tax Team at 913.364.5204. Please be patient as our phone line will have a high volume of calls.

Our VITA Team is looking forward to assisting you this tax season!

VITA Program Site Coordinator: Jessica Pontbriant,
913.684.0733, jpontbriant@leavenworthcounty.gov



NEXT STEPS TO GET READY FOR 2026 TAX FILING SEASON

IRS Tax Tip 2026-03, Jan. 14, 2026

Monday, Jan. 26, 2026 is opening day for the 2026 tax filing season. This is when taxpayers can begin filing their 2025 federal tax returns.

Here are a few simple steps taxpayers can take now to prepare for filing:

Create or access their IRS Individual Online Account: IRS Individual Online Accounts are available 24/7, to view account information, make payments, manage communication preferences and protect tax information.

Gather and Organize Records: Organized tax records make preparing a complete and accurate tax return easier. Some examples of tax records can include:

- Forms W-2 from your employer(s)
- Forms 1099 from banks, issuing agencies and other payers including unemployment compensation, dividends, pension, annuity or retirement plan distributions
- Form 1099-K, 1099-MISC, W-2 or other income statement if you worked in the gig economy (aka sharing economy or access economy)
- Form 1099-INT if you were paid interest
- Other income documents and records of digital asset transactions.

Important Notice:

As of 30 Sep 25, the IRS phased out paper refund checks. The preferred method of Federal refunds is direct deposit to a banking institution. Release of a paper check for a Federal refund will take at least 3 months.

The IRS will first issue a CP53E Notice, asking the Taxpayer to respond within 30 days with direct deposit banking information or to establish an ID.me account and enter the direct deposit information online. If the Taxpayer does not respond to the Notice after 6 more weeks, the IRS may request more information or they may go ahead and release a paper check.

So far, this does not apply to Kansas refunds or Property Tax relief checks, although direct deposit is strongly encouraged for Kansas also.

The COA will offer tax services by appointment at the following locations: Council on Aging, Leavenworth; Basehor Library; Linwood Library; Tonganoxie Library and Easton.



LIEAP can help pay your home heating bills!

Additional information may be obtained by calling 1.888.369.4777.

Persons Eligible

1. An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
2. The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level according to the guidelines listed.

Please bring copies of the following:

Other information may be requested as needed.

2026 Income Eligibility Guidelines

9

VOLUNTEER WITH MEALS ON WHEELS

- Do you have 90 minutes during the week? (late morning)
- Do you like meeting new people?
- Do you want to help those in our community?
- Do you drive?

For information about volunteering for Meals on Wheels, please contact Dawn Owens at 913.684.0786 or email dowens@leavenworthcounty.gov.

*All Meals on Wheels volunteers must be able to pass a criminal background check.



To be added to our email distribution list, please contact us @ seniors1st@leavenworthcounty.gov

For our full events and activities calendar, visit our homepage @ [Council on Aging](https://www.leavenworthcounty.gov/council-on-aging)

FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK


CLICK HERE TO BE DIRECTED TO OUR PAGE.

Some services are funded in part by the Older Americans Act and are provided without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origins or sex. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the Area Agency on Aging @ 1.888.661.1444

This informational brochure is published by:
Leavenworth County Council on Aging

Editor: Jessica Pontbriant

Director: Connie Harmon

Email: seniors1st@leavenworthcounty.gov

Website: [Council on Aging \(leavenworthcounty.gov\)](https://www.leavenworthcounty.gov/council-on-aging)

LEAVENWORTH COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING ADVISORY BOARD

The Leavenworth County Council on Aging's Advisory Board works in an advisory capacity to further the agency's mission. Working collaboratively with the Executive Director, the Advisory Board ensures accountability and transparency, enhances the agency's visibility and partnerships, champions and represents the interests of the agency and ensures there are adequate resources to carry out the Council on Aging's mission to help older adults in Leavenworth County live and age well. All Advisory Board meetings are open to the public.

NEXT MEETING:

February 18, 2026 at 1:30pm
711 Marshall Street, Suite 100
Leavenworth, KS 66048
913.684.0777

OPEN ADVISORY BOARD POSITION

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Areawide Advisory Council has an open Advisory Board position. The Board is looking for an applicant to represent Leavenworth County. For information on how to apply, contact Connie Harmon at 913.684.0784.

**Make A
Donation**

SUPPORT US TODAY!

