

The Legacy Leader

Summer 2023 Volume 1 | Issue 2

A quarterly newsletter for 50+ adults

SENIOR SERVICES AT WARFORD OPENS



Mayor Nelson and Mayor-Elect Stanley participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony for Senior Services at Warford

50+ PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Jeff Whitsell- Senior Services Coordinator

April 26, 2023—

City leaders and Amarillo area citizens attended the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for Senior Services at Warford Community Center. Parks and Recreation Director Michael Kashuba addressed the attendees before Mayor Ginger Nelson, Councilmember (now Mayor-Elect) Cole Stanley, and Assistant City Manager Laura Storrs officially opened the 50+ area. “The Warford Activity Center is a great facility, and we’re excited to share it with our senior citizens,” Kashuba said.

Senior citizens now have approximately 3,400 square feet to enjoy table tennis, dominos, cards, board games, jigsaw puzzles, and more.

The southwest door—which features a convenient ramp—is now available and opens into the Senior Services office. The office is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday to assist with senior-related issues.

50+ members have access to all Warford programs, such as pickleball, water aerobics, chair yoga, and nutrition classes. City staff plans to work throughout the year to add senior-related programs that focus on socialization, exercise, and nutrition.

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City of Amarillo Parks and Recreation Department Senior Services Division

HEALTH



HEARING LOSS AND DEMENTIA

At a recent conference at Amarillo College, a local audiologist presented surprising data from 2020 JAMA and subsequent 2023 Lancet studies. The most recent study lists hearing impairment as a modifiable risk factor for dementia and

encourages the use of hearing aids for people with hearing loss. Other peer-reviewed studies have confirmed that hearing aids are an effective measure in preventing cognitive decline.

The Lancet study found a decrease in cognition for every 10-decibel reduction in hearing.

Hearing loss affects two-thirds of Americans over 70. To find out if you have hearing loss, contact a licensed audiologist.

Sources:

Alison R. Huang, PhD1; Kening Jiang, MHS1; Frank R. Lin, MD, PhD1; et al. *Hearing Loss and Dementia Prevalence in Older Adults in the US*. JAMA. 2023.

F. Jiang, PhD, S. Raj Mishra, PhD, N. Shrestha, PhD, A. Ozaki, PhD, S. S. Virani, PhD, T. Bright, PhD, et al. *Association between hearing aid use and all-cause and cause-specific dementia: an analysis of the UK Biobank cohort*. The Lancet. 2023

“The study lists hearing loss as a modifiable risk factor for dementia, and encourages the use of hearing aids.”

SENIOR MOMENT: MUSCLE STRENGTH

Liz is a sixty-seven-year-old retired accountant. She watches what she eats and walks daily at the park near her home.

At a recent appointment, her doctor said she was concerned about Liz’s muscle strength. Her physician said muscle weakness put Liz at an increased risk for falls.

“But, I walk daily,” Liz replied, “at least ten-thousand steps.”

Liz’s doctor told her about the most recent medical studies that showed muscle strength—particularly in the lower body—is necessary to prevent hospital visits and early death.

Liz joined a senior Tai Chi club that meets at the park where she still walks. Her leg and core strength have improved, and Liz feels confident about her future.

BENEFITS OF SWIMMING

The Centers for Disease Control recommends swimming for all age groups, including seniors. Here are a few of the reasons you should swim:

1. Two and a half hours per week of aerobic physical activity, such as swimming, can decrease the risk of chronic illnesses.
2. Swimming can improve the health of people with diabetes and heart disease.
3. Swimmers have about half the risk of death compared with inactive people.
4. Overall, water-based exercise is more enjoyable than other forms of exercise.
5. Because swimming causes less joint pain, you can exercise longer in the water.





Gallbladder removal is a common treatment for gallbladder disease

AVOIDING GALLBLADDER DISEASE

The gallbladder sits below the liver and releases bile, which helps with digestion. If the gallbladder becomes infected, inflamed, or develops stones, the pain can be debilitating. Here are some ways you can help prevent gallbladder disease:

1. **Don't Skip Meals**– This increases the amount of bile in the gallbladder.
2. **Eat Whole Grains**– Lowering your bad cholesterol decreases your risk of gallstones.
3. **Maintain a Healthy Weight**– People who are obese have a three-times greater risk of gallbladder disease.
4. **Eat Fruits and Veggies**– The fiber and vitamins are good for your gallbladder.
5. **Avoid Fatty Foods**– Fat makes your gallbladder work harder. Reducing your intake of fried foods and saturated fats will lessen the gallbladder's workload.
6. **Get Plenty of Vitamin C**– Studies have shown a link between vitamin C and a lower risk of gallbladder disease.
7. **Lose Weight Slowly**– Quickly losing weight is bad for many reasons. The gallbladder doesn't empty correctly when we skip meals. Aim to lose a pound or two a week with a healthy diet.
8. **Drink Plenty of Water**– Yes, you've heard this from every doctor you've seen. The Mayo Clinic recommends between 2.7 and 3.7 liters of water per day.

Source: WebMd: <https://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/ss/slideshow-how-healthy-gallbladder>

Nutritious Foods You Should Try

When it comes to eating healthily, most of us find plenty of excuses not to. When we do make dietary changes, we're often left unsatisfied with nutritious food options. Here are six foods that can please your taste buds and give your body the nutrients it needs.

-Steel-Cut Oats Instead of Rolled or Instant Oats- Steel-cut oats digest slower and are less likely to cause an increase in sugar levels. Steel-cut oats take a little longer to cook but taste terrific.

-Canned Salmon Instead of Canned Tuna- Salmon contains more of the heart-friendly omega-3 fats than tuna as well as higher levels of vitamin D and calcium. Canned salmon also has few contaminants such as mercury.

-Apple Butter Instead of Jelly- Apple butter contains more fiber and less sugar than jelly. The name is misleading; apple butter isn't butter in the sense that we know it, but it is spreadable like butter.

-Skyr (pronounced skeer) Yogurt Instead of Regular Yogurt- Skyr is a type of Icelandic yogurt. Skyr yogurt contains the healthy bacteria of other yogurts, but usually has higher levels of protein and less fat.

-Rye Bread Instead of Whole Wheat Bread- Though whole wheat is better for you than white bread, rye can contain twice as much fiber and more of the B vitamins than whole wheat bread.

-Canadian Bacon Instead of Turkey Bacon- Canadian and turkey bacon are both better nutritional choices than traditional bacon. If you don't care for the taste of turkey bacon, Canadian bacon has approximately twice the protein as turkey and less total fat. Check the labels though; Canadian bacon can be high in sodium.

Matthew Kadey, R.D. 2023. "Simple Foods Swaps for a Nutrition Boost." SilverSneakers, March 23, 2023. https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/simple-foods-swaps-for-a-nutrition-boost/?utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=253410777&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_Bkcm2RySJAnhC0QboV_yfm_AXwYdc6l-BqLloyS8OjDLvtHrg-JiyQcGZwrcU8E73BAdCnlu_yZV97andZVl3M_yvpWd9-pBcfVzYGMGBznFU5_A&utm_content=253410777&utm_source=hs_email

OUT AND ABOUT

SENIOR MOMENT: NEW FRIENDS

Joan moved to a new city to live with her son after her husband passed. She gradually acclimated to her new community, but Joan missed her hometown senior center. So, one morning Joan stopped by the local center.

The facility was nice but very different than the one she'd left behind. Not only did she not know anyone, but some weren't seniors. The man at the desk told Joan the center is multigenerational. However, they did offer several senior-specific programs.

A woman about Joan's age asked if she liked playing card games, and Joan said she did. Soon, Joan was smiling and chatting with seven welcoming women at a card table.

The following week, Joan started participating in water aerobics before playing cards. Now she has friends in both groups.

The change wasn't easy at first, but now Joan is at the center every day. She even enjoys beating younger generations at pickleball now and then.

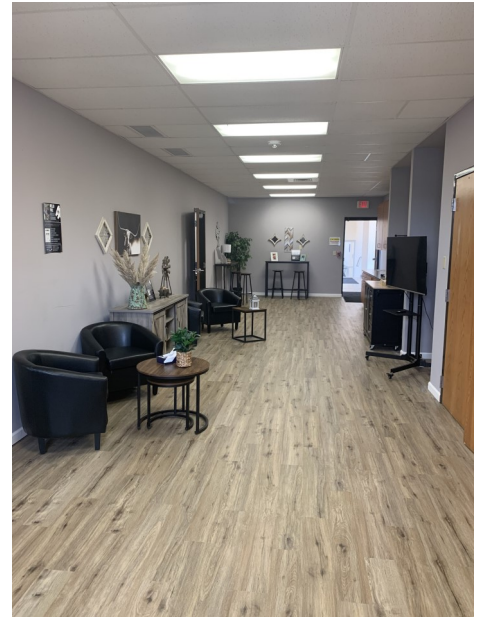
SENIOR PROGRAMS



Before renovation of Senior Services commons area

The Senior Services Department publishes a monthly activity calendar. Calendars can be found in the Senior Services office or online at www.theneighborhub.org.

Senior programs may change throughout the year as member demand warrants.



After renovation of Senior Services commons area

Senior Services will host events throughout 2023. For up-to-date information about our events, go to www.theneighborhub.org, or the Amarillo Parks & Recreation and Charles E. Warford Activity Center Facebook pages.

VALUE OF THE NEW SENIOR SERVICES FACILITY

By working with local nonprofits and businesses, the much-needed 50+ area at Warford Activity Center will meet the needs of current and future seniors. Ideally, the work that city staff is putting into senior programs and events will lead to expanded services in the future.

The value of Senior Services can't be overstated, but what about the economic value? What costs went into renovating the Senior Services space? Parks and Recreation Director, Michael Kashuba, says the department was able to save money "...through salary savings in the previous budget year along with a lot of hard work from staff (painting walls, putting in baseboards, building furniture, etc.). [We] also received a gracious donation of labor from the family of a parks department employee who installed all the new flooring at no cost."

The Parks and Recreation staff is committed to providing programs and events for Amarillo citizens at the best value. Senior Services also works with local partners to cut costs without sacrificing quality.

COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

YOU HAVE NEEDS, AND WE WANT TO HELP

Jeff Whitsell

Four months. That's how quickly the Parks and Recreation staff turned a former daycare into Amarillo's newest senior citizen facility. Though there is more work to be done—including installing new energy-efficient lights—creating a 50+ area in less than eighty days is remarkable.

But the tradeoff to such swift work is a lack of comprehensive senior programs. The Warford Activity Center has established programs—water aerobics, Walk With Ease, and pickleball. We also have new programs like Coffee with Friends, cards, board games, and jigsaw puzzles. Then there are programs we have yet to introduce because of timing, lack of staff, or unforeseen demands. My commitment to you, Amarillo seniors, is that we will work toward implementing the programs you want as quickly as possible.

"I can't guarantee that new senior hockey league you want, but go ahead and ask for it. We can't deliver the right services if we don't know what they are."

In return, I humbly request a few things from you:

- Be patient— My coworkers and I went to work for the city because we like to help others. We want to meet your needs, but we are often limited by staffing shortages, tight budgets, etc.
- Let us know— What do you like about our senior programs? What can we do better? What programs do you wish we had? I can't guarantee that new senior hockey league you want, but go ahead and ask for it. We can't deliver the right services if we don't know what they are.
- Try something new— Even with several activities available at Warford (and more to come), it isn't possible to provide every game, activity, or class. So, if you're a tennis player, try pickleball. If there aren't enough Yahtzee players, give Farkle a go. Your new favorite activity may be right in front of you.
- Watch us grow— Remember, Senior Services at Warford Activity Center is brand new. My goals are to expand our programs and events as the months and years go by. I can't wait to see what the 50+ activities look like in the future, and I want you to be a part of the experience.

If you're a new 50+ member, welcome to Warford Activity Center. If you haven't checked out our facilities or still debating on becoming a member, stop by my office and visit with me. With so many great folks—staff and members—you can't help but enjoy yourself if you give Warford a chance.

Jeff Whitsell is the Parks and Recreation Senior Services Coordinator. He has worked as a nonprofit professional, family caregiver, and other social service roles for the past 15 years.

SENIOR MOMENT: FINDING PURPOSE

PJ worked as an electrician for forty-seven years. No longer capable of the physical demands, he retired three years ago.

PJ tinkered with various projects around the house but felt unproductive and almost depressed. People used to turn to PJ for his expertise in solving complex electrical problems. PJ was the best in town, valued; he was somebody. Suddenly, no one called for PJ's help anymore. Some days he wondered why he bothered getting dressed.

One day PJ was having coffee at the community center. The center's coordinator, Gloria, overheard PJ discussing his career and moved to the chair next to him to talk. With a broad smile, PJ told Gloria all about his profession. Then Gloria asked if PJ wanted to teach electrical classes at the center. PJ had trained hundreds of electricians, from apprentices to journeymen, but never in a classroom. He timidly agreed to Gloria's idea.

Six months later, seven young men and women attend PJs Fundamentals of Electrical Work class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. PJ feels valued and is happy again.

City of Amarillo Senior Services

Our Mission:

To maximize health (physical, mental, and spiritual), wellness, economic security, and the connection to the community for active adults 50+ in and around Amarillo, Texas.

LOCAL SENIOR REFERRAL RESOURCES

Area Agency on Aging: (806) 331-2227

Benefits Counseling: Terrie Campbell

Care Coordination: Janet Schulte

Caregiver Support: Jaime Sharp

Panhandle Aging and Disability Resource Center: (855) 937-2372

211 Texas (Referral Service): Call 211

City of Amarillo Senior Services: Jeff Whitsell (806) 378-4290

Website: theneighborhub.org



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