

The Legacy Leader

Fall 2023 Volume 1 | Issue 3

A quarterly newsletter for 50+ adults

SENIOR SERVICES HOSTS FIRST EVENT



Jimmy Williams (left) and Charley Oathout (right) pitch cornhole bags at the 50+ Cornhole Tournament. The tournament was the first City of Amarillo Senior Services event.



50 & BETTER CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT A SUCCESS

Jeff Whitsell- Senior Services Coordinator

August 16, 2023—

Participants enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship and competition during the 50+ Cornhole Tournament inside the Warford Activity Center gym. This was the first event held at the new Senior Services location since opening on April 26th.

Two-person teams faced off in the double-elimination bracket until the top three places were decided. The teams who received trophies and medals were:

First Place: Martinez & Martinez

Second Place: Floyd & Holmes

Third Place: Farley & Martinez

West Texas Benefits Group representative, Verna Popp, generously donated the awards as well as drinks for the event.

(Continued on page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

HEALTH

Mental Health.....2

Walking.....2

NUTRITION

Garlic Ginger Ramen.....3

Getting the Most Out of Your Meals.....3

OUT AND ABOUT

Programs & Services.....4

Cornhole Tournament.....4

COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

Finding Common Ground.....5

SENIOR MOMENTS

Senior Moment: Exercise & Quality of Life.....2

Senior Moment: Arthur & Evelyn.....4

Senior Moment: A Little Help....5

LOCAL SENIOR REFERRAL RESOURCES

UPCOMING EVENTS.....5

*Senior Moments are fictionalized stories based on real events

The Legacy Leader is a quarterly newsletter published by the City of Amarillo Parks and Recreation Department Senior Services Division

HEALTH

DON'T NEGLECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health over the age of 50 is a vital aspect of overall well-being, influencing one's quality of life, relationships, and daily functioning. There are steps we can take to boost and maintain our mental health.

Emotional Health

Changes such as retirement, loss of loved ones, or physical health issues can be difficult. It is important to express our emotions and find support from family, friends, and mental health professionals when needed. Some ways to maintain our emotional health are:

- Participating in social activities
- Practice mindfulness
- Try stress-reducing techniques such as yoga and meditation

Cognitive Health

There are ways to preserve our cognition as well.

- Try word puzzles
- Play games that require concentration
- Learn new skills

When it comes to mental health, the only bad strategy is ignoring it.

"It is important to express our emotions and find support from family, friends, and mental health professionals when needed."

SENIOR MOMENT: EXERCISE IS ABOUT QUALITY OF LIFE

We know we're supposed to exercise. Keeping our bodies fit helps prevent heart disease, mitigates the risk of falls, and keeps us strong and limber.

But exercise is also about aging gracefully, maintaining independence, and mental well-being. Finding the right exercise program, in the right atmosphere, with people who encourage each other can make all the difference in the world.

Exercising is meant to make us healthy—physically and mentally. It's meant to encourage relationships within our exercise groups. And exercise is meant to create positive attitudes and joyful lives.

WALKING: A SIMPLE WAY TO STAY HEALTHY

A September 2023 article by Jamie Davis Smith of Yahoo!life detailed the positive impacts walking can have. The article highlighted what studies have shown about regular walking. Walkers:

- Live longer—People who walk 7,000 steps/day have a 50-70% chance of living longer than non-walkers.
- Have a reduced chance of heart disease & cancer—A JAMA International study found (among 10,000-steps/day walkers).
- Have better mental health—Walkers have less stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Have stronger bones—Just 30 minutes of walking/day improves bone density.
- Have a lower risk of type 2 diabetes—The risk goes down with every 2,000 steps/day.
- May have a reduced risk of dementia—JAMA Neurology found that as few as 3,800 steps/day may reduce the risk of dementia.

Did you know you may qualify for a free membership?

If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, you can enjoy Warford Activity Center amenities at no cost.



NUTRITION



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MEALS

You've decided to make healthier meal choices. Now what? How can eating healthy be fun? What foods have the right nutrients? Here's what the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends:

- Make eating a social event. Enjoy meals with friends or family members as often as possible. Take advantage of technology to enjoy meals virtually with loved ones in different cities or States.
- Drink plenty of liquids. Enjoy coffee and tea if you like, or some water, milk, or 100% juice.
- Add a touch of spice. Fresh and dried herbs and spices, such as basil, oregano, and parsley, add flavor without the salt.
- Make the most of your food choices. Foods that are full of vitamins and minerals are the best way to get what you need.
- Be mindful of your nutrient needs. You may not be getting enough nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin B12, and also protein. Read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods and also speak with your healthcare provider about possible supplements.
- Keep food safe. Discard food if it has an "off" odor, flavor, or texture. Refer to the "use by" dates for a guide to freshness.

Source: USDA Food & Nutrition Service, "Healthy Eating for Older Adults." March 2020, https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_21_HealthyEatingForOlderAdults.pdf

Reset Nutrition Classes

Led by COA Public Health this complimentary eight-week class is based off the recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Participants receive a 2-month membership to Warford Activity Center. Go to www.amarillo parks.org/programs-events/reset or call (806) 378-6511 for more information.

Upcoming:

Winter January 8-March 5, 2024; Spring— March 26-May 21, 2024

Garlic Ginger Ramen

Ingredients

1/2 pound lean ground beef (15% fat or less)
2 cups water
2 packages oriental flavor instant ramen-style noodles, broken into small pieces
16 ounces frozen vegetables (try stir-fry or any type)
1/4 cup chopped onion (any type) or 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1 Tablespoon fresh ginger or 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
2 cloves garlic, minced or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat (350 degrees F in an electric skillet), brown ground beef. Drain fat from the skillet.
3. Add water and ONE seasoning packet to cooked beef and mix well.
4. Add vegetables, onion, ginger and garlic. Bring to a boil over high heat.
5. Add ramen noodles, reduce heat to low, and simmer 3 to 5 minutes until vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally.
6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Source: [Garlic Ginger Ramen with Beef \(foodhero.org\)](http://foodhero.org)

OUT AND ABOUT

SENIOR MOMENT: ARTHUR & EVELYN

Arthur sat alone in the corner of the bustling senior center; his eyes fixed on his cup of tea. It had been a year since his wife, Margaret, had passed, leaving him feeling alone in a world that suddenly seemed unfamiliar.

Just as Arthur was standing to leave, he heard a kind voice nearby. "Mind if I join you?" a smiling woman asked. "I'm Evelyn. This is my first time here, and I would love to sit and talk."

Arthur nodded, offering a shy smile as Evelyn eased into the seat across from him. The two shared stories of their lives, and a connection quickly formed. Evelyn's vivacity reminded Arthur of the energy Margaret had carried. Talking to Evelyn oddly gave him both a feeling of anxiety and comfort.

Over the following weeks, Arthur and Evelyn became inseparable, playing cards, walking in the park, and reliving memories over tea. Arthur's heart didn't feel broken like it had, and he was no longer lonely.

One afternoon, as they strolled along a path, Arthur paused under a shade tree overlooking a pond. He took a deep breath and turned to Evelyn. "I want you to know how much you've meant to me these past months. You've brought light back into my life," Arthur said.

Evelyn's eyes welled with tears as she placed a gentle hand on Arthur's cheek. "And you, my dear, have made me smile. I didn't think I ever would again." She wrapped her arms around Arthur's shoulders and, cheek to cheek, they embraced.

Arthur and Evelyn discovered that they could love again. In each other, they saw a future filled with hope.

PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ASSISTANCE

Senior Services is working toward a full schedule of programs to meet various interests. Here's what is available now:

- Coffee– Brewed fresh every weekday morning at 8:00
- Cornhole– Available every weekday in the north room
- Jigsaw Puzzles– Over 25 puzzles are available for anyone interested (ask a staff member to set up a table)
- Games– Cards, dominoes, board games
- Books– Enjoy reading in our commons area
- Water Aerobics– Check the Warford weekly calendar for times
- Free Popcorn– Made fresh every Friday
- Assistance– Senior Services is dedicated to helping all senior citizens



Free popcorn is available for seniors every Friday

For event information, go to theneighborhub.org. Also, follow Amarillo Parks & Recreation and Charles E. Warford Activity Center on Facebook.

TOURNAMENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



1st Place team:
Martinez & Martinez
(left)

2nd place team:
Asberry & Holmes
(right)



Air conditioners struggled to keep the gym cool due to the brutal summer weather; however, the atmosphere was filled with conversation, laughter, and the occasional celebratory whoop.

The next cornhole tournament is scheduled for January 12, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in the Warford Activity Center gym. The tournament format will be double elimination, coed singles. Entry is free; to register go to www.theneighborhub.org and click on Upcoming Events or stop by the Senior Services office.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Jeff Whitsell

I was at the pharmacy the other day. I feel almost famous there since everyone knows me. “Hi, Jeff,” Jan, the pharmacy tech, invariably says with a smile. We talk about our dogs for a bit. Then Jan bags and hands me some treats she keeps on hand for customers’ puppies. But Jan wasn’t there on this particular day. Instead, there was an amiable twenty-something named Tia who greeted me. Unlike Jan, she hadn’t memorized my name and birthdate, so I gave them to her. She typed the information into her computer, paused, and asked me to repeat my date of birth, and I did. As she punched the revised numbers into the system, she said, “Sorry, I thought you said nineteen-seventeen.”

My first thought was, why does this lady think I’m a hundred and six years old? Of course, Tia didn’t genuinely believe I was a centenarian; she just knew I was relatively old.

Before I get anyone riled about how Millennials, Zoomers, and whatever we call the youngest generation see us, let’s be honest with ourselves first. By *ourselves*, I mean the folks with reading glasses perched atop their thinning, gray hair as they walk down every grocery store aisle. Then, somewhere around aisle 3, our glasses slide off because we bob our heads to the ambient supermarket music (you know who you are). It’s a safe bet that you’ve probably lumped Tia’s generation into one annoyingly youthful category. Right? Maybe every now and then?

I don’t know if there has always been a disconnect between generations, but we need to find commonality soon. Why? Because the country as we know it is changing. By 2034, more Americans will be over 65 than children under 18—for the first time in our nation’s history. The ratio of workers to Social Security beneficiaries is currently 2.8 to 1; in 1960, it was over 5 to 1.

This change demands a restructuring of our society. There will be seniors who have to remain in the workplace longer. The demand placed on independent living facilities means many elderly parents will move in

with their working-age children. Some households may have three or four generations living under the same roof. Multiple generations will be dependent on each other, and that means we must communicate and work in unity. More importantly, that means we must treat each other as humans rather than demographics. Maybe we can even teach the Zoomers the lyrics to our supermarket songs.



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

SENIOR MOMENT: A LITTLE HELP

Mrs. Sullivan, an 80-year-old retired nurse with a love for people, found herself in need of a caregiver. Her children arranged for a woman named Lily to assist her.

Lily, a tall 35-year-old, arrived at Mrs. Sullivan's doorstep one morning. With an easy smile, she assured Mrs. Sullivan that they would soon be good friends. Skeptical of Lily, Mrs. Sullivan let her into her home.

After a few days of getting to know one another, Lily acclimated to Mrs. Sullivan's routine. While cooking, Lily regaled Mrs. Sullivan with tales about her husband, Billy, and two children, Brook and Daniel. Mrs. Sullivan laughed as Lily described crayon-covered walls and how Billy chased Daniel around the house when it was bath time.

Lily encouraged Mrs. Sullivan to try new hobbies. They explored museums, attended community events, and joined a painting class.

Mrs. Sullivan's spirit began to shine again. With Lily by her side, she no longer felt confined by the limitations of her body or mind. She mentored Lily, guiding her through the challenges of marriage and raising kids.

Mrs. Sullivan discovered there isn't a time limit for forming meaningful connections. Mrs. Sullivan and Lily now have a profound appreciation for human connection.

LOCAL SENIOR REFERRAL RESOURCES

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.

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

50 and Better Upcoming Events

October-December

- Thursday, October 19, 2023– 50 and Better Open House: Non-members over 50 can experience all Warford Activity Center amenities from 8 a.m.— 3 p.m. Cost: Free
- Monday, November 13, 2023– 50 and Better Day Trip: Join us on a day trip to Honey Bee Winery in Canyon. Amarillo Transit will leave the Warford Activity Center at approximately 10:00 a.m. Participants will enjoy shopping, lunch (participants pay for their food and drinks), and friendly companionship. Cost: \$5 for transportation (participants pay for their own lunch and shopping)
- Thursday, December 14, 2023– 50 and Better Christmas Party: Get into the holiday spirit our 2023 Christmas Party in the 50 and Better area of Warford Activity Center. Guests will enjoy Christmas fellowship, refreshments, music, and more. Cost: Free



City of Amarillo
Parks & Recreation– Senior Services
P.O. Box 1971
Amarillo, TX 79105-1971

Phone: (806) 378-4290
E-mail: jeff.whitsell@amarillo.gov