November - December 2026



GOLDEN THREAD

COUNCIL ON AGING Lake County

Happy Holidays

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY. CONNECTED WITH CARE.

Feature Story

Harvesting Hope: Celebrating a Community Who Make It Possible

Throughout the year, many community collaborators ensure that vulnerable Lake County seniors continue receiving essential daily care, companionship, and smiles! Here are a few that we are extra grateful for as we wrap up 2026!

Marous Brothers Construction: For the fourth consecutive year, the Marous Brothers Construction Outreach Committee, comprising 24 volunteers, dedicated a day in November to cleaning up leaves in the yards of eight Lake County seniors. This incredible team raked and bagged leaves, trimmed a few shrubs, and even cleaned out a handful of gutters, leaving each senior with a cleaner yard and a smile.

Sew4Service: is a non-profit volunteer organization that brings together creative individuals to transform donated fabric, yarn, and supplies into handmade comfort items for people and pets in need. Founded out of a Wickliffe storefront, the group eventually relocated to the Shore Cultural Centre in Euclid to accommodate its rapid growth and community outreach. In December 2025, these selfless creators crafted 150 full-sized blankets to bring warmth and care to homebound seniors through the Lake County Council on Aging's winter distribution.



Pictured: Sew4Service volunteers



Pictured: Marous Brothers Construction Outreach Committee

Feature Story continues on page 2

Welcome to our newsletter: Golden Thread

Subscribe to our bi-monthly newsletter through our website www.lccoa.org to have our extended, 8-page version, emailed directly to you!

Stay Connected with LCCOA:

8520 East Ave., Mentor

www.lccoa.org

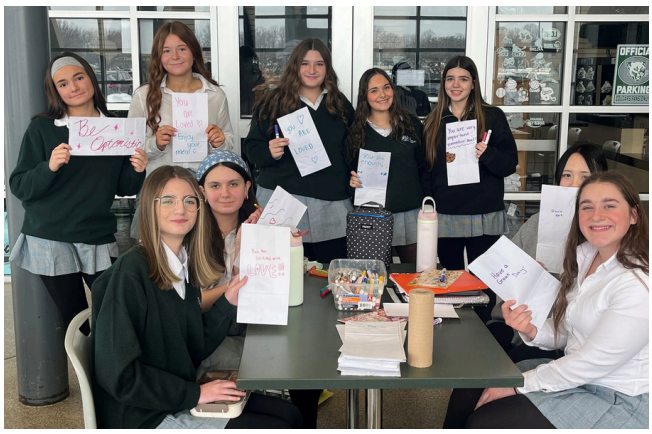
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(440) 205-8111

(Feature story cont'd)

Lake Catholic: Students gather to decorate brown lunch bags that are delivered to Meals on Wheels recipients. This is part of an outreach ministry that supports student camaraderie and community outreach. For the past year, Service Coordinator & Theology Teacher Beth Paskey and her groups of giving students have donated over one thousand embellished lunch bags. These bags accompany the hot prepared entrée and sides and include a beverage, bread, and fruit. As the Meals on Wheels program is currently serving nearly 800 seniors a day, Monday through Friday, these crafty youths remain committed to bringing a smile to a homebound recipient's face and joy to their hearts.



Pictured: Lake Catholic students decorating the lunch bags for MOW recipients.

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Need help navigating long-term care, or assistance with daily living? The Lake County Council on Aging is your starting point for vital community services and supports.

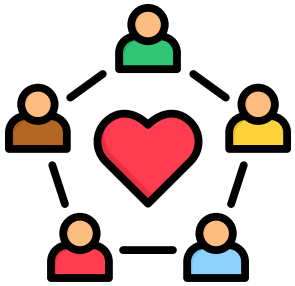
As part of our **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**, our Information & Assistance (I&A) Specialists serve individuals aged 60+, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers. We assess your unique needs and link you directly with trusted local providers.

I&A Specialists also complete referrals to LCCOA services like Meals on Wheels, Social Work, Homemaker, and our Non-Medical Home Care program.

Available Resources & Support (including, but not limited to):

- **Care & Legal:** Navigation of long-term care options and legal assistance.
- **Living & Finance:** Assistance with housing options and financial issues.
- **Daily Living:** Practical community support, including help with yard work, transportation, medical equipment and nutritional concerns.

To speak with one of our I&As, please call (440) 205-8111

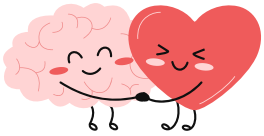




A Silver Lining: Senior Success Story

"I want to say thank you to Council on Aging with all my heart! I so much appreciate your organization and for all your help lending me resources in my time of need! Also, thank you for the meals!" – Vicki in Mentor

Social Work Services



Be Happy, Be Healthy!

Sometimes we are so busy that we do not think about what we can do to practice self-care and maintain our overall well-being.

Preserving physical health is important. Attending routine doctor appointments throughout the year can help prevent a decline in health. Eating nutritious meals, getting enough sleep, practicing good hygiene, and developing exercise routines, if able, are also keys to staying healthy.

Another important aspect of self-care is taking care of your mental health. Take time to notice how you feel and address any emotional needs. Surround yourself with a positive support system and engage in activities that bring you joy and help you feel connected. If you are going through a challenging time, consider calling the Lake County Council on Aging at (440) 205-8111 to request assistance.

There are many other things you can do for your health and happiness. Find out what works best for you. Take care!

Nutrition Services



Lake County Council on Aging is looking forward to participating in the nineteenth annual Subaru Share the Love Event as a member of Meals on Wheels America, when the 2026 Subaru Share the Love Event launches in November 2026. Every purchase or lease of a new Subaru through January 2027 results in a $300 donation from Subaru America to one of the four participating national charities. Choosing Meals on Wheels America keeps those dollars helping seniors through Meals on Wheels programs, such as Lake County Council on Aging. You can Share the Love when you buy or lease a new Subaru. Visit your local dealer at Adventure Subaru in Painesville or Ganley Subaru in Wickliffe to check out the new models and great deals. Your purchase or lease of a new Subaru during the Share the Love Event will directly benefit seniors in Lake County when you choose Meals on Wheels America.



A key part of the Share the Love Event for Lake County seniors is the annual food drive from mid-November to mid-December to collect non-perishable food items for "Blizzard Bags" to be distributed to Meals on Wheels homebound seniors in Lake County. Adventure and Ganley Subaru dealers, along with Lake County senior centers and local community partners, will be food donation sites. You can Share the Love by donating non-perishable food items: items high in protein, in containers that can be easily opened with a pull-top, ready-to-eat items, and items that you enjoy eating; such as, peanut butter, canned tuna or chicken, cans of soup or chili, cans of fruit or vegetables, protein bars, etc., are perfect! These blizzard bags contain a 2-3 day supply of shelf-stable food items. This will also be an emergency food supply for our Meals on Wheels clients in case of severe weather. More details will be posted on the Lake County Council on Aging webpage, or you can call (440) 205-8111.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2026 EVENTS:



LCCOA in the Community:

Thursday, November 12, 2026- ASA Fall Harvest Wellness Fair

- Concord Community Center (7671 Auburn Rd.) from 10:00am to 12:00pm
- Vendor information and conversations about local services that help seniors in our area.

Events at LCCOA (8520 East Ave., Mentor):

Friday, November 13, 2026 at 1:00pm- Property Tax Reductions for Seniors and Financial Wellness Event

- Presented by Treasurer Zuren. This event will include updates on new property tax legislation, Lake County programs and services for seniors, and interactive Family Fued-style game on financial literacy and identity theft.

Homemaker Services

Holiday Home Prep for Seniors - and Beyond!

Holidays draw people together from near and far, and hosting families takes a lot of thought and preparation. If grandma and grandpa's house is the gathering place for all generations to descend upon, then let's address issues that will help them enjoy the festivities safely and worry-free.

Make sure the home is clutter-free with clear pathways. Arrange furniture to leave ample room to maneuver wheelchairs, walkers, or rollators. Pull up throw rugs so wheels or feet don't get tripped up.



How do we ensure our loved one maintains cleanliness and safety long after they leave after celebrating the holidays? The Council on Aging has a Homemaker Program that provides light housekeeping services twice a month to eligible seniors. Homemakers keep the home clean by dusting and vacuuming the main living area and master bedroom, and sanitizing and disinfecting the kitchen and main bathroom.

With Homemaker services, your loved one will live in a well-kept, safe space. This will give families peace of mind while promoting a positive impact on the lives and well-being of our Seniors.

For more information on the Homemaker Program, please call the Council on Aging at 440-205-8111.

GOLDEN THREAD CONNECTION: BENJAMIN ROSE "WE CARE...BECAUSE YOU DO"

If you're caring for an older adult, of course you want the best for them.

But you have questions. Concerns. And probably some challenges. Where can you look for answers, how do you select the best options — and when do you even find the time to do the research?

WeCare... Because You Do℠ is an individualized care coordination program that helps to answer your toughest questions, connect you to the services you need . . . and bring you peace of mind.

If you're caring for someone with dementia, the Caregiver Relief Program may help pay for non-medical in-home care from an approved home care agency, giving you time to run errands, attend appointments, or simply take a break.

The program is offered through WeCare. When you enroll, you'll be paired with a dedicated Community Care Navigator, who can answer questions and connect you with resources that make caregiving easier.

Who is Eligible?
You may be eligible for Caregiver Relief Program funding if you:

- Live in Cuyahoga, Lake, or Lorain County
- Provide daily care for someone living with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia
- Do not receive respite services through another community program
- Enroll in WeCare... Because You Do

Call 216-373-1797 or email wecare@benrose.org to see if you qualify.

LCCOA STAFF CONNECTION:

Gerald Kasunic, Executive Director



Gerald "Jerry" Kasunic has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Lake County Council on Aging. Throughout his distinguished career, Kasunic has dedicated himself to improving the lives of older adults and individuals with disabilities through innovative programming, strong public policy, and collaborative leadership.

Most recently, Kasunic served as Deputy Associate Director for the Aging and Disability Resource Center at the DC Office on Aging, and as an Administrative Officer for the DC Department of For-Hire Vehicles. He also served as the District's State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Director, where he expanded resident protection programs, secured budget enhancements, and represented the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsmen on Capitol Hill.

Kasunic holds a bachelor's degree from Eastern Michigan University. He has also earned certificates in Executive Leadership from George Washington University, protective services from Temple University, and information and referral systems.

Outside of work, Jerry and his wife, Debra, love cheering on the Cleveland Monsters, visiting local festivals, and supporting community artisan events. In his free time, he enjoys gardening, cooking, and baking for his neighbors.

November: National Family Caregivers Month



Whether they are managing medications for an aging parent or providing daily comfort to a spouse with a chronic illness, family caregivers are the backbone of our healthcare support system.

The Impact of Caregiving:

Caregiving is a deeply rewarding experience, but it also comes with significant demands. Many family caregivers juggle full-time jobs, look after their own households, and manage complex medical tasks—often putting their own needs last.

- Physical & Emotional Toll: Constant responsibilities can lead to high stress, exhaustion, and caregiver burnout.
- Financial Strain: Many caregivers cut back on working hours or pay for caregiving expenses out of their own pockets.
- Isolation: The intense time commitment can sometimes leave caregivers feeling cut off from friends and social activities.



How You Can Support a Caregiver

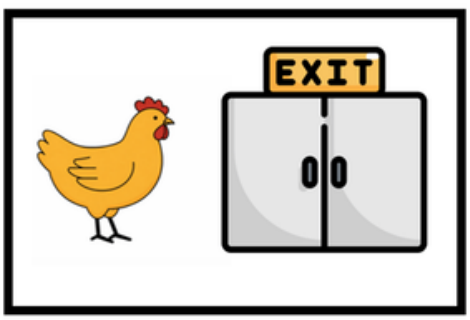
We can all play a part in lifting up the caregivers in our lives. If you know someone who is caring for a loved one, consider reaching out with these simple actions:

- Offer specific help: Instead of saying "let me know if you need anything," try offering concrete support. Say, "I'm heading to the grocery store, what can I pick up for you?"
- Listen without judgment: Sometimes, the best gift you can give a caregiver is a safe space to vent, cry, or just talk about something unrelated to caregiving.
- Send a small token of appreciation: A handwritten note, a warm meal, or a gift card for a coffee can remind them that their hard work is seen and valued.

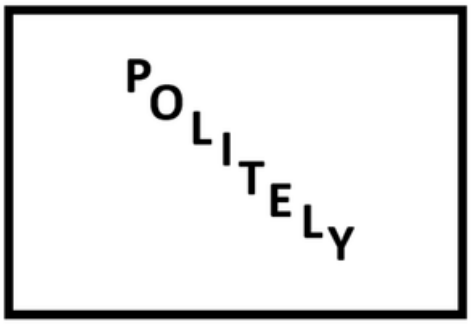
Resources and Support

If you are a caregiver, please remember you cannot pour from an empty cup. The Council on Aging can link you to local support groups and programs. Call (440) 205-8111 for more information.

Brain Health: Solve the puzzles by thinking literally!







Puzzle answers on page 8

December: National Learn a Foreign Language Month

December is National Learn a Foreign Language Month, making it the perfect time to give your brain a fun and rewarding workout.

Why Learn a New Language?

- **Brain Health:** Juggling a new vocabulary acts like mental exercise. It sharpens memory, improves attention span, and helps keep your mind active.
- **Lifelong Growth:** It is never too old to start. Research shows that older adults can successfully learn new languages and enjoy the cognitive benefits.
- **Fun and Connection:** Learning a few phrases lets you connect with new people, enjoy international films, or prepare for a future trip.

Simple Ways to Start This December

- **Try Free Apps:** Use beginner-friendly apps like Duolingo or Babbel for just five minutes a day.
- **Use the Library:** Check out audiobooks, beginner reading books, or free digital language tools through your local public library.
- **Keep It Light:** Do not worry about becoming fluent right away. Focus on learning simple greetings like "hello" and "thank you" in a language that excites you.



THREADS OF TIME: MENTOR

If you want to know what Mentor, Ohio looked like before it became a bustling city, just ask Bonnie Leskovac. A dedicated LCCOA volunteer for three years, Bonnie has called Mentor home since 1950. She fondly remembers a time when it was a quiet country town, and grocery shopping required a trip to Painesville or Willoughby.

For teenagers back then, life revolved around community and rhythm. “That’s what we did; we just danced!” Bonnie recalls. Her youth was marked by a rite of passage through local landmarks: entering "Teen Town" at the Center Street School at 13, graduating to the "Teen Den" on Mentor Avenue at 16, and finally dancing at "Torch Light" inside the old Bargain Fair building at 18.

Mentor-on-the-Lake mirrored Geneva-on-the-Lake's carnival energy with Mentor Beach Playland, featuring a dance hall, roller rink, penny arcade, bowling alley, and a carnival area with a carousel and games near the water.

Thank you, Bonnie, for sharing your vibrant history and your time with LCCOA!



Pictured: the now-closed penny arcade in Mentor-on-the-Lake. Source: clevelandmemory.org

SENIOR CONNECTIONS: WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

At the Council on Aging, we focus on community involvement! We want to hear from YOU, and so does our community! Below are the two prompts that we plan to feature in each upcoming issue of the Golden Thread. Featured stories will only use your first name and city of residence, unless a media release form is completed. To have a chance of being featured, submit your stories!

Silver Linings: Tell us about a time the Council on Aging helped you! Do you receive Meals on Wheels and enjoy the program? Have you met with our Benefits Specialist to discuss your Medicare options? Email us your "silver lining" story to councilonaging@lccoa.org (50 words or less, please).

Threads of Time: Are you a long-time resident of Lake County? Share with us your favorite memory of how our local area has changed over the decades. Let's reminisce about the good ol' days and share those "I remember when..." stories. Email your favorite memory or story to councilonaging@lccoa.org (100 words or so), along with a photo (optional).

LCCOA Celebrates Centenarians!

The Lake County Council on Aging seeks to honor all residents of Lake County who turn 100 in 2026 and upcoming in 2027. What an honor and privilege it is to celebrate the history, wisdom, and resilience of our centenarians.

Please visit our website: www.lccoa.org and complete the Centenarian Certificate Request so we can send your loved one (or you) a beautiful Centenarian Certificate from LCCOA.



Answer Key: Brain Health

#1) Chicken out
#2) Wise guy
#3) Politely decline

LCCOA Hours and Location:
Mon - Fri: 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Sat - Sun: CLOSED
Closed on federal holidays

8520 East Ave.
Mentor, OH 44060

COUNCIL ON AGING
Lake County