



**The National
Resource Center on
Nutrition & Aging**

**ADDRESSING RURAL AND
SOCIAL CONNECTION NEEDS
OF RURAL OLDER ADULTS
DURING THE COVID-19
EMERGENCY**

JULY 15, 2020



**The National
Resource Center on
Nutrition & Aging**

INTRODUCTIONS



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Resource Center on
Nutrition & Aging**

OPENING REMARKS



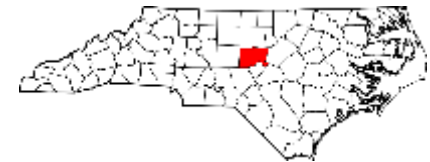
STILL WORKING HARD FOR CHATHAM SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Dennis W. Streets, MPH, MAT, LNHA

July 15, 2020

CHATHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

- Celebrated our 46th anniversary as nonprofit on July 8th as the primary local portal for seniors and their families
- Mission: *Promote independent living and the physical and mental wellness of seniors, and support their family caregivers through a wide array of services & opportunities*
- Primarily serve socially & economically needy, not eligible for Medicaid
- Chatham is a geographically large, rural county that is economically and culturally diverse—bordering our state's capital and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- A third (about 24,500) of our county's population is aged 60 and older—far outnumbering those aged ≤ 17
- In a typical month, we serve about 1,200 persons in some manner.



CHATHAM'S COVID-19 STORY

- Became concerned about COVID-19 in mid-February and began emphasizing importance of good public health practices—producing a flyer approved by the State DHHS
- Placed our 1st large shelf-stable meals order in late February
- Became integral part of County COVID-19 Response Team in early March
- Encouraged NC Association on Aging to hold a workshop on COVID-19 at its annual training conference in Wilmington
- NC's 2nd COVID case was confirmed in Chatham in the morning of March 6th – during NCAOA conference
- Closed our centers' doors to the public on March 16th—at the start of our planned March for Meals campaign
- NC DHHS confirmed community transmission on March 18th

Prepare—don't panic.



Sound Public Health Practices
for Seniors
in Light of the Coronavirus



NUTRITION SERVICES OVERVIEW

- Nutrition services include: Congregate [Senior Center] Meals; Home-Delivered [Meals-on-Wheels] Frozen/Shelf-stable Meals; In-Home Aide Personal Care; and partnership with local food pantries
- Our kitchen in Siler City produces our meals.
- A retired RD/RN (Board member) prepares our menus.
- We have 110+ MOW volunteers (mostly seniors) staffing 12 routes; we stopped using them in early April.

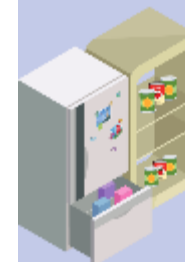


NUTRITION SERVICES: COVID-19 RESPONSE

- Delivery and pick-up of shelf-stable and/or frozen meals and many other needed items
- Use of contracted transit provider to deliver congregate meals each week to folks who previously were transported to our centers for meals and activities
- Used other community partners to deliver meals to homebound every 3-4 weeks (i.e., Public Health, Parks & Recreation, Sheriff's Office, County Manager's Office, UNC medical students)—now using contracted transit provider
- Writing of multiple grants and appealing to the community for funding to support efforts
- Assisting local food pantry with provision of fresh produce



Did You Know?



Chatham COA's Frozen & Shelf-Stable Meals help ensure that home-bound seniors have nutritious meals in emergency situations and adverse weather events.

Donate Today to Help Support this Vital Service!



SOCIALIZATION & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES OVERVIEW

- Friendly check-in calls
- Peer-support calls via our volunteer Community Ambassadors
- Friday morning conference calls with COA ED & guests
- Collecting, producing & distributing a wide array of materials (e.g. reading materials, puzzles, exercise bands)
- Providing incontinence supplies
- Offering pet supplies and other supplies upon request
- Offering assistive equipment
- Providing in-home personal care and family caregiver respite
- Arranging rides to essential medical appointments



SOCIALIZATION SERVICES OVERVIEW

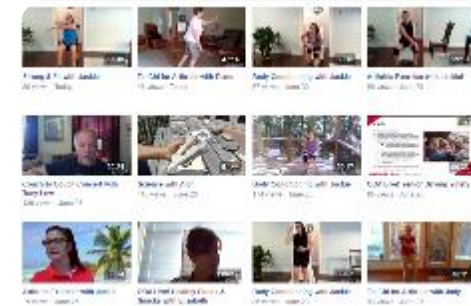
- Extensive online and virtual classes and activities—see www.chathamcoa.org

One participant said early on that she was "tired of watching TV". After she has her coffee in the morning, she does her exercise, because she can "hear your (Jackie's) big mouth telling me to raise this arm, raise the other"...Jackie added that it was hysterical to hear her, but also rewarding to know that Jackie's exercise classes can still have an impact when we aren't together and that they are helping the participant take care of herself in this time of uncertainty. This congregate participant has been properly following the advice of physical distancing (she hasn't been away from her house since March 12th) and she can't wait until she can return to the center. This person is now a regular participant in various virtual activities.

- Continued online & print versions of our newsletter with input from community partners—see www.chathamcoa.org

Online Offerings & Other Helpful Resources to Stay Connected from Home!

Living Updated Regularly with New & Exciting Additions!

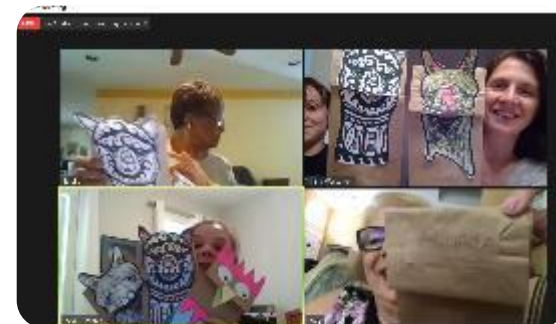


THE CHATHAM SENIOR TIMES



CHALLENGES TO DELIVERING SERVICES

- Providing *nutritious* meals
- Avoiding putting older volunteers at risk while keeping them interested and supportive of COA—finding substitutes resulted in new partnerships
- Discovering ways to help those most vulnerable (e.g., seniors aged 85+ living alone in a rural community)
- Overcoming the lack of Internet access & technological capability
- Discovering ways to replace lost discretionary income (e.g., facility rental income, group events)



People of all ages can make a mark during this difficult time

Full of History, May 25, 2020, 2:00 am

By Donna Strouts
Charlton County Council on Aging

In 1961, John F. Kennedy was the first president to designate May as a special time to celebrate the current and past contributions of older persons to our nation. Every year since, presidents have followed suit, including President Trump, who recently proclaimed May as Older Americans Month.

Similarly, over many years the Charlton County Board of Commissioners have added their support for this special month. The year 2020 is no exception.

On April 23th, the board passed a resolution recognizing that "we are a stronger community when all residents — young and old — can use their time, talents and life experiences to the best of their abilities to contribute to the greater good." The administrators added that this is "never more evident than during this unprecedented period of the COVID-19 pandemic."



CHALLENGES TO DELIVERING SERVICES

- Seeking funding sources for renovation of facility space to allow for greater physical distancing
- Identifying activities that might interest older men
- Inability to provide some services (e.g., VITA, SHIP/Health Insurance Counseling)
- Combatting ageism
 - *People of all ages can make a mark during this difficult time*
 - *Mother's Day: More meaningful, yet difficult, during COVID-19*
 - *Layton Long, Dennis Streets share advice, ways to help seniors in Chatham through COVID-19*
 - *Making a Difference by Wearing a Mask*

COVID-19 PIVOTS TO KEEP

- Continue working relationship with The Rural Interprofessional Longitudinal Scholars (RIPLS) Program at UNC to seek ways to realize potential of telehealth and other initiatives
- *UNC med students assisting Chatham COA during COVID-19*
- [Virtual & Online Exercise & Activity Classes](#): *“My husband and I are very impressed with the efforts being made to help seniors in Chatham County during this COVID-19 pandemic. The online exercise classes with Jackie are fantastic. I am attending more classes than I used to attend in person. Thank you so much.”*
- Online *Listen & Learn* and *Couch to Couch* series — building off our in-person Senior Education Conference and our previous music events





LESSONS LEARNED AND AFFIRMED

- We don't have to do it all ourselves—there are many willing partners (old and new)
- "Physical Distancing" does not have to mean "Social Isolation"
- Be open to new ways of serving
- Importance of providing reliable information about community resources—production of [Chatham Aging Navigator \(CAN\)](#) tools
- Importance of equity and social justice as key guiding principles:

As UNC-Greensboro Graduate Gerontology Program Coordinator Elise Eifert reminds us “Aging begins at birth and is influenced by many things, including racism, over the life course. If we want people to have the opportunity to live long, successful lives, we must do the work to create a society that fights against social injustice and truly becomes anti-racist.”



Understanding COVID-19 and How to Stay Healthy During the COVID-19 Outbreak



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE FEELING ISOLATED

The time of COVID-19 is challenging, and it is okay if you are feeling stressed or lonely during this uncertain time. Many people are experiencing these feelings. While social distancing is our best protection against COVID-19, it can lead to a sense of loneliness and isolation. There is support to stay connected, and resources are available if you are struggling with your emotional and mental health during this time.

Tips for Staying Mentally Well Now and After COVID-19:

- **Establish daily rituals/habits**—Make routines and habits to follow, do what you would in your normal routine such as going to bed and waking up at the same time and getting dressed each day.

THANK YOU

Dennis W. Streets

Executive Director

Chatham County Council on Aging

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**SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS:
*ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN
MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA***

Tammy Rosa

July 15, 2020



**The National
Resource Center on
Nutrition & Aging**

INTRODUCTION

July 15, 2020

UPPER PENINSULA AREA AGENCY ON AGING/UPCAP



- Region XI Area Agency on Aging
- Regional Focal Point for all Aging and Caregiver Support Programs.
- Population 302, 981
- 1/3 Land Mass of State of Michigan
- 3% of State Population



COVID-19 IMPACT ON OLDER ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY

- Challenges accessing food
- Reduced transportation
- Increased isolation
- Decreased Assistance from family and friends
- Increased Risk for Individuals with Dementia Living alone



COVID-19 IMPACT ON AGENCY

- Increased need for meal services in areas not currently serviced by providers
- Staff working from home and re-directing job duties based on need
- Increased need for additional network partners
- Increased level of outreach



NUTRITION SERVICES OVERVIEW

- 6 Nutrition Providers
- Serve 15 Counties
- 75 HDM Routes
- 57 Congregate Meal Sites
- Serve over 2000 clients daily throughout the U.P.



NUTRITION SERVICES OVERVIEW

- Meal service provided in a variety of settings
- Meal routes up to 5x per week
- Hot and cold as well as emergency meals available



SOCIALIZATION TO PREVENT ISOLATION

- “Lunch with Friends” Program
- Caregiver Support Programs (Telephonic)
- Friendly Reassurance calls
- Health Promotion Workshops (Virtual)
- Adult Day Services



CHALLENGES TO DELIVERING SERVICES

- Increased Need for food/meals in extreme rural
- Decreased staffing
- Decreased routes
- Increased social isolation
- Technology Needs (Providers/Participants)
- Lack of transportation options



COVID-19 PIVOTS

- Increased contact with HDM and Congregate Meal participants
- Drop ship meals into extreme rural areas
- Partnered with Michigan Aging and Adult Services/AASA to provide fresh produce/dairy
- Increased caregiver support resources
- Take-out meals at congregate sites
- Virtual programs added



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PIVOTS TO KEEP

- Increased service areas
- Take-out meals in addition to congregate
- Increasing additional food supplies into extreme “food desert” areas
- Maintaining increased volunteer network
- Increased virtual programming



LESSONS LEARNED ...

- Increased access to virtual programs/collaboration
- Large need for food in some rural areas
- Need for increased contact with participants
- Adaptability of staff
- Value of telecommuting option
- “Power of Community”



THANK YOU

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KIOWA “GKOY-GKOOT” RURAL NEEDS

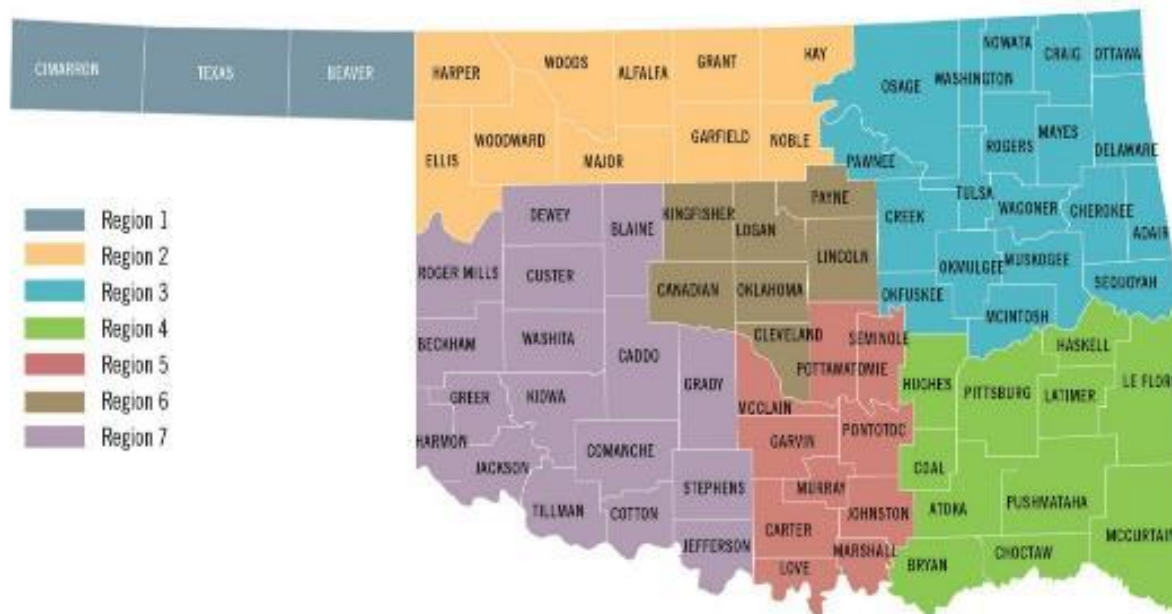
Darin Zotigh, ACA/BA

July 15, 2020

OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATION



- The Kiowa Administration on Aging (AOA) offers congregate and home delivered meals located in left lower part of Southwest Oklahoma.
- The headquarters are located in the town of Carnegie, Oklahoma.



KIOWA “GKOY-GKOOT” SERVICES.....

- Supportive Services, Respite Care & Fastrans Passes
- Loan Closet-Handicap Equipment
- Residential lawn care & Light Home and Auto Repairs



KIOWA “GKOY-GKOOT” SERVICES

- Beauty Salon, Educational Health Presentations/Activities
- Referral Services



KIOWA AOA COVID-19 STORY

How COVID-19 Pandemic Has Impacted Our Rural Community In Southwestern Oklahoma

- **Pre-existing Health Conditions** (diabetes, cardiovascular disease and respiratory illness) are just one of the many impacts that has effected our tribal elders. Less activity for congregate elders; increase in blood sugar levels due to inactivity.
- **Bad Road Conditions** for Elders and AOA Staff to deliver food (Increase van usage; more tire problems)
- **Not enough staff** to prepare for increase elder participation. We had to hire temps and recruit volunteers to meet the demands.
- **Overcrowding** of multi-generational families (No break in privacy with children not going to school and work)



COVID-19 IMPACT ON OLDER ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Shortage of product supply

- Increase in food prices – we developed innovative ways to meet elder needs



COVID-19 IMPACT ON OLDER ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY

- Caregivers in isolation - no access to local laundromat
- Overcrowded conditions - no air conditioning



KIOWA NUTRITION SERVICES OVERVIEW

- **Pre-COVID:** Monday through Thursday: Kiowa serves lunches. Menu varies with a variety of options.
- Fridays are special with breakfast served. Each 2nd week of the month a salad bar is served every day along with soups and sandwiches are offered as well.



NUTRITION SERVICES OVERVIEW

- **Pre-COVID:** The 3rd week of the month the Elders celebrate their birthday for the month. A traditional meal is cooked for that day w/cake & ice cream.
- Each elder is given a gift. Arts and Crafts are displayed and purchased from the public and games/bingo is held after the meal.



SOCIALIZATION SERVICES OVERVIEW

- Socialization during COVID-19 has been a challenge. However, our AOA program has come up with activities to encourage movement and provide socialization at a distance.
- The first activity was a **Door Contest**:



SOCIALIZATION SERVICES OVERVIEW - CONTINUED

Car Activity

- Each participating elder decorated their car relating to the covid-19 message. 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes was awarded to the winner.



SOCIALIZATION SERVICES OVERVIEW - CONTINUED

Walking Activity

- Each participating elder wore a pedometer and kept a record log of numbers and submitted every two weeks – we coordinated with IHS Diabetes Coordinator.
- Winners are announced at the end of month for best garden and canned goods.
- Elders submit products at the end of season and meet all elders who have participated in garden project.



CHALLENGES TO DELIVERING SERVICES

- All elders are homebound—Roads need repair
- Not enough vehicles and staff to deliver
- Staff is overworked...many volunteer time
- No adequate cooking equipment/refrigeration
- Keeping up with increased growth in participation



COVID-19 PIVOTS TO KEEP

Changes our organization made during the COVID-19 season and would hope to keep going forward....

- **Chicken Project, Garden Project, Ribbon Project**

What new services or events are your seniors perhaps, looking forward to still being available after the COVID-19 season subsides?

- **Hair Salon, Door Contest for Homebound Elders, Canning Contest-Farmers market**



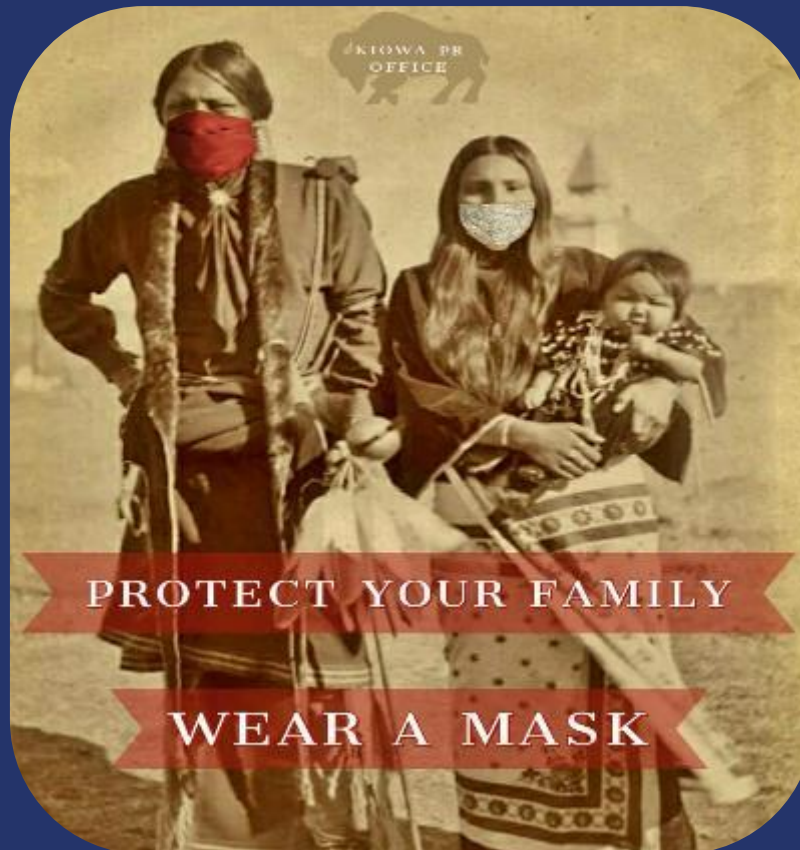
LESSONS LEARNED

- More awareness of crowded conditions due to multi-generational living conditions, and how it effects our elders. Some elders love being around grandchildren while some need peace and quite. If growing older isn't planned; then life is challenging.
- If you live in the rural community advocacy to improve road conditions is so essential.
- Employees and Elders need to be heard on what makes them feel safe when they return to normalcy.
- How valuable each of your jobs are to every elder you serve.
- How valuable support staff/co-workers are to your program.



THANK YOU AND BE SAFE!

DARIN ZOTIGH
AOA@KIOWATRIBE.ORG





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Q & A



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LOOKING AHEAD

PROMISING PRACTICES HUB

- We will be adding a promising practices hub to the NRCNA website in August. It will feature snippets from senior nutrition programs around the country, lifting up their good works, innovative programming and helpful peer resources for all to see.
- Share your promising practices with us here:
<https://nutritionandaging.org/contact/>



SHAPE THE FUTURE, SHARE YOUR INSIGHT

Technical Assistance and Training Needs Assessment Survey

- The NRCNA is fielding a survey to examine the educational needs of senior nutrition program staff across the country.
- The survey findings will be used to establish recommendations that will inform a strategy for ongoing training development by the NRCNA for the benefit of senior nutrition program professionals in the Aging Network.
- Visit our dedicated website to learn more, & participate:

<https://nutritionandaging.org/tatnsurvey/>





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THANK YOU