Eras Senior Network is hoping it strikes gold two years in a row. Last year, Eras was successful in receiving one of 16 nationwide A Community Thrives challenge grants from Gannett to purchase a car to assist clients in Milwaukee’s Harambee Neighborhood.

This year, the agency is hoping for another A Community Thrives challenge grant to support 100 low-income older adults with costly utility bills this summer and winter. But to be eligible, it needs to raise $6,000 from the local community by August 12th.

“We are focusing on supporting the rising and challenging utility costs for low-income older adults in Milwaukee County and Waukesha County,” says Heather Uzowulu, development director at Eras. “With the increase in utility costs, we worry that low-income older adults may refuse to turn on their air conditioner or fan to save money. Not keeping cool enough, however, can cause extreme illness or even death, especially in older adults.”

Same with the approaching winter – when older adults might keep their furnace at temperatures so low that it could cause health problems.

To be considered for one of the 16 A Community Thrives challenge grants in 2022, Eras needs to raise a minimum of $6,000 in local funds by August 12th. Uzowulu says that the agency is seeking the top grant of $100,000. “These funds must be donated through the A Community Thrives grant challenge link on our donate page of our website at Eras.org/Donate,” she says. (Or, use the handy QR code below with your smartphone to donate faster and easier).

Last year’s Gannett challenge grant started with the agency raising the necessary $6,000 in local funds to be eligible to compete for a grant. Then, the agency received a $10,000 grant from a local funder to support the project. “If that wasn’t wonderful enough, a few weeks after the challenge closed, we received word that we won one of the 16 nationwide grants for $25,000,” says Uzowulu. “The sum of all the funds raised helped us to purchase a 2020 Nissan Altima.”

Eras uses the vehicle to help older adults in Milwaukee’s Harambee Neighborhood, which is an area with extreme poverty. For Mary, an 88-year-old client in the Harambee neighborhood, getting rides in the new vehicle has been very important.

“Eras has made my life more bearable,” Mary says. “The car has helped me get to and from the store in a very comfortable and individual way. And the volunteer helped me greatly with my grocery store. She was familiar with the store and I went there because I wanted hot food and she knew exactly where everything was and assisted me more than anyone could have.”

→ (Continued on inside flap)
Angela says the next few years will continue to present financial challenges for Eras and other non-profit organizations. “The needs of our communities only continue to grow, specifically the needs of the older adult population. Isolation and physical activity are serious challenges and are opportunities for older adults. And unfortunately, the support from partners and governmental agencies doesn’t grow at the same speed as the number of individuals that need our support.”

Angela believes Eras is well-positioned to weather the financial dilemmas of the future. “We’re running on all cylinders,” Angela says. “We have a lot of strong leaders within the organization, staff, our board and advisors, included, and we’ve built a good reputation in the communities we’ve been serving for over 40 years now. In addition to our dedicated volunteers, our success comes down to financial support and how we navigate, pivot and think creatively to continue bringing monies into the organization.”

“There’s certainly a special place in my heart for the older adult community,” says Angela. “My grandmother lives with us, which means I can see the life of an older adult every day at home.”

Angela has been active with Eras since she moved back to the Milwaukee area in 2012 to grow her career. “I was looking for a connection to the community, and an existing board member and colleague linked me to Eras,” she says. “I also have ties to the older adult community with my professional accounting and as a social security advisor.” Angela works as a chief financial officer with EUA, an architecture and engineering firm, headquartered in Milwaukee’s Third Ward.

As board president, Angela says she aims to assist the organization’s leadership team whenever needed and ensure that Eras is recognized as a leader in the non-profit community. “I can bring my financial background and experience to the non-profit table, for example we both juggle the opportunities and demands of staffing, and we both budget and scenario plan for future circumstances.”
It’s no surprise that scam artists are constantly searching for new ways to swindle people out of money. One easy way for scam artists to trick unsuspecting victims is through telemarketing scams.

As an agency, Eras Senior Network is always looking for information that can alert clients, volunteers and supporters to new types of fraud. According to the AARP, here are seven current scam calls you should always hang up on.

1. **Health Testing Services.** Example: “I’m calling from Genetic Testing Services. Your doctor reached out to us because he is concerned with the cancer that runs in your family. We can test you for this but need your Medicare number to cover the cost of the test.” Never give out your Medicare number or insurance information unless you place the call first.

2. **Computer Company.** Example: “I am calling from Apple, we found malware on your phone. We need you to download AnyDesk so we can remove that virus for you.” Never download something suggested by someone who calls you. That may put a virus on your device, allowing the scam artist to steal your information.

3. **IRS Scam.** Example: “This is the IRS and I am calling to inform you of a federal arrest warrant for not paying your taxes.” Please note: real IRS employees will never demand money or threaten you over the phone. They may call to set up appointments or discuss audits, but only after trying to notify you by mail first.

4. **Grandparent Scam.** Example: “Hi Grandma, it’s me. I got into some trouble and need $800 for bail money. Please don’t tell Mom and Dad, I need your help.” Never wire money, always ask for their name, and inform others of the situation.

5. **Imposter Scams (Amazon).** Example: “This is Amazon Security – there was an attempt to order items on your account. We can get you a refund, I just need a few pieces of information to get this started.” If you think there is an actual problem with your Amazon account, go directly through Amazon and never through someone who calls you first.

6. **Energy Company.** Example: “This is We Energies – you have missed two payments and your electricity will be shut off by end of today unless you pay immediately over the phone.” Utility shutoffs aren’t handled this way – you would get a notification in the mail.

7. **Social Security Check Freeze.** Example: “This is the Social Security Administration, and your Social Security check has been frozen due to fraudulent activity, press one to take care of this.” Remember, federal or state government officials will not ask you to pay over the phone.

In summary, if you feel suspicious about a call, do not provide personal information, and just hang up. You can do your own research and contact the company/person calling you if you’d like to follow up on it. If you have any questions about scams, or if a client you are working with mentions something that doesn’t make sense or which could resemble the above, please call Eras Senior Network for assistance.
Donations Being Sought for 2022 Holiday Giving Program!

It’s never too early to think about the Holiday Season. This year, Eras is focused on working with the community to provide up to 900 self-sufficiency gifts for older adults and adults with disabilities living on a fixed income.

The goal is to focus on the most basic needs and provide each recipient with at least $50 in gift cards and postage stamps. Items needed include cash donations, books of forever postage stamps and $10 gift cards from Walgreens, Pick ‘N Save and Walmart. Please include gift card receipts.

Unwrapped donations can be dropped off at or mailed to the Eras Senior Network Waukesha County office: 2607 N Grandview Boulevard, Suite 150, in Waukesha, 53188 (Attn: Becca Snow) or the Eras Senior Network Greendale office: St. Alphonsus Parish, Door B6, 5960 W Loomis Road, Greendale, 53129. Items and money collected are due December 12th.

For more information, contact Heather Uzowulu at (262) 522-2404 or Heather.Uzowulu@Eras.org

Fall Cleanup is Just Around the Corner!

Volunteers are needed for the annual fall yard cleanup at client homes throughout Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. Cleanups involve raking leaves and trimming bushes to prepare for winter. Volunteers can include families, friend groups, scout groups, faith groups or school groups. In most cases, volunteers bring their own rakes, clipping shears and bags but sometimes clients have equipment at their homes. Cleanups will be scheduled in early fall once leaves begin falling.

For more information or to sign up to volunteer please contact:
Milwaukee (414) 488-6500
Waukesha (262) 549-3348

S.T.O.P.
SENIOR FRAUDS & SCAMS

Educating seniors on how to recognize and S.T.O.P. frauds and scams.

S Sounds too good to be true? - It probably is.
T Time pressure - No one should force you to make snap decisions.
O Organize your thoughts and trust your gut - Is this a fraud or scam?
P Don’t be Polite - It’s okay to hang up the phone, shut down the computer, or close the door.

PREVENTION BEGINS WITH EDUCATION

To schedule a presentation call: (262) 549-3348
Learn more at Eras.org

Funding provided by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Wisconsin Consumer Antifraud Fund
Retiree Finds New Work with Eras

When Doug Wolak retired two years ago after decades as a certified public accountant, he knew he would be doing more of what he loved: traveling, helping others, and reading. He didn’t expect to head back into the accounting business. But that’s what he did – and with Eras Senior Network.

“When I saw this opportunity come up, I thought to myself that instead of volunteering for Eras more, I could help Eras in another way … as an employee,” he says. As a part-time accounting assistant, Doug handles the routine accounting matters of the agency such as entering transactions into the accounting system, reconciling agency bank and credit card statements, and payroll processing.

Doug and his wife began volunteering with Eras in 2002 (known then as Interfaith): Doug would help clients with yard work and his wife, Diane, would drive clients to medical appointments.

But that’s not all Doug does. He is also a part-time lifeguard for the Waukesha YMCA which helps keep the pools open during the current lifeguard shortage.

Doug says working with Eras is rewarding because he believes in its mission. “It’s very worthwhile,” he says. “Having been a volunteer, I know first-hand what kind of work is involved to coordinate the matching of clients with volunteers. I am now in the background to make sure that financially, Eras has things in order so when auditors come in at the end of the year, things are looking good, and financials are in order.”

Doug says the Eras position allows flexibility for him to travel, spend more time with his wife, and play with his two-year-old Bernedoodle, Theo, and their two cats, Milo and Samuel, but not be saddled with full-time responsibilities.

“It’s nice to have a little bit of flexibility,” Doug says. “When you’re retired, you end up having a lot more things to do than you imagined. So, the flexibility of the work is very appreciated.”

< (Continued from page 1)

The Nissan Altima is currently being driven by Eras’ Harambee Neighborhood Program Manager, Freda Wright, to deliver food pantry stock boxes to home-bound low-income older adults. And one volunteer drives the vehicle to take older adults to medical appointments and for groceries. “And now, we are recruiting more volunteers from the Harambee Neighborhood to use the car to drive local older adults to medical appointments and to access food.”

Uzowulu says the agency is hopeful it can reach its targeted donation level and once again receive the national grant. “It is so exciting that we received one of the $25,000 grants last year and are hopeful to be eligible again this year,” she says. “Raising $25,000 can take a lot of work, so receiving such a large grant makes a huge impact in our community.”
Flu vaccine: Your best shot for avoiding serious illness from the flu

Don’t forget to get the annual influenza vaccine this fall to provide protection against the flu. The highly contagious virus, spread by coughing, sneezing or by having close contact with an infected individual, is especially dangerous for adults 65 years and older because they have a high risk for developing serious complications. That age group accounts for most hospitalizations and deaths from influenza, in part because changes in immune defenses increase with age.

Medical professionals say the annual flu immunization is safe and effective. And when more people are vaccinated, fewer people get sick and need treatment.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that everyone six months age and older receive an annual influenza vaccine. People 65 years and older should get a flu shot instead of the nasal spray vaccine.

You can get a flu shot from your doctor or you can get it at pharmacies. Remember to call before you go to ensure the pharmacy has an adequate supply available and to determine whether you need to have an appointment.