

Program Director

Judith Amorsen



When I was a small child growing up in Denmark, I vividly recall spending time with my grandparents – walking with my grandfather and him giving me a special caramel hard candy. I remember my other grandparents – my grandmother’s delicious cakes, homemade cookies and fruit sauce desserts. And oh – their backyard! It was filled with carefully tended flowers, vegetables, fruit trees and a beautifully manicured lawn. We would take walks to the neighborhood pond to feed the ducks with day-old homemade bread.

When my grandfather passed away in my late teens, we were not sure how my grandmother would react as she had memory challenges. But when the funeral service was over, my grandmother suddenly stood up and thanked everyone for coming. It was so surprising. Afterwards, she pulled me aside and said, “Judith, it is very important to always say, ‘Thank You.’” I have never forgotten that.

Those memories were from long ago, but I recall them like it was just yesterday. My grandparents were such a big part of my life and I treasure those memories. Perhaps that is why I choose to work with older adults as a profession. It brings me joy and comfort and I hope that what we do at Eras Senior Network brings you joy and comfort as well.

In these challenging times, I am reminded of the old concrete bunkers along Denmark’s West Coast which were used by Germans in WW II to prevent Britain from entering their occupied land from the North Sea. Those bunkers remain today to remind us of a time we never want to repeat. It is also a reminder that we humans are tough and resilient – and that by working together and caring for each other, we can get through tough times.



Eras
SENIOR NETWORK

June 2020
Client Newsletter

Eras Contacting Clients to Update Records

In recent months, Eras Senior Network has received many calls from clients asking why we are contacting you for personal information – especially since it seems like you just furnished that information a couple of years ago.

Well, when companies change, procedures and paperwork often change as well. And it has been no different for Eras Senior Network after it took over for the former UNISON/Interfaith Programs for Older Adults.

Over the past year, Eras learned that some of its 1,600 clients had incomplete paperwork while others had information which we feared could be too old to be accurate. And having correct information is critically important for funding purposes. Eras operates on funding from the Milwaukee County Department on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Center of Waukesha County, and the United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County; those agencies need correct information to determine the amount of money which should be allocated to Eras.

“Eras is committed to supporting seniors and providing critical services free of cost,” says Sophia Franklin, Program Manager, Faith in Action – Milwaukee County. “In order to do this, we rely on funding from various entities. Some of our funding sources request accurate information on the clients we serve so we can continue to provide these services at no cost. We want to ensure that the information we have for you in our database is up to date.”

Questions we are asking include ethnicity, marital status and monthly income (if you want to share). Other questions include asking about your living status and whether you live alone or with others, the number of people you live with, the primary language you speak, whether you are a Veteran, and your gender. This information is only reported in aggregate, or groups, to funders. Your specific information is stored securely and never shared or sold.

Eras staff will eventually be resuming home visits to each of our clients when it is safe to do so. No doubt – it’s a big endeavor since we will be meeting with every single one of you. But these home visits are so helpful for both Eras and you: during a home visit, we can explain the services we offer which perhaps you did not know about and might be interested in receiving.

“Home visits help us understand our client’s needs better,” Franklin says. “We look forward to meeting with you and providing you with additional resources and services when it is safe to do so. This also helps us find the right volunteer to assist with your requests.”

Milwaukee: (414) 488-6500, Waukesha: (262) 549-3348



A New Way of Living in Assisted Living

Moving from a home where you raised your family and into a senior living apartment is an important decision. When making that decision, it's important to know that senior living today is very different from senior living years ago.

For instance, you can easily move into an independent living apartment and transition to receiving assisted living services without having to change apartments. And that's the beauty of locations such as Capri Senior Communities' Summit Woods in Waukesha.

"When needs arise for more care, people never have to move," says Becky Steinke, Executive Director of Summit Woods. "They can stay in their own apartments and the only change is the amount of services we provide."



That means someone living in an independent fashion might live next to someone in assisted living – just like a regular neighborhood. And that is what appeals to Joyce Kirkvold, 81, who moved to Summit Woods this past spring with her dog, Mr. Beasley.

"You aren't segregated at Summit Woods," says Joyce. "I feel like I am part of a community here. Most assisted living facilities do not offer that."

Joyce's apartment has two bedrooms – one of which is used as a computer room/library. She also has a full kitchen but because she is on assisted living, three meals a day are provided. She also receives weekly housekeeping services. Joyce is an example of a resident who receives the minimum amount of assisted living care. In total, Summit Woods offers five levels of assisted living care.

"We want people to understand the continuity we offer,"

says Steinke. "People can move in and don't have to move again if they need additional care. They can still feel like they are independent despite needing assistance in some ways."

Wayne Hornik echoes the benefit of interspersed independent and assisted living apartments. A retired sales and marketing executive, Wayne, 82, and his wife, Lou Ann, 80, have received assisted living services at Summit Woods for six years. "The diversity is very nice," says Wayne. "We are all people and although we are all together, some people might be getting more help than we are getting."

The community feeling and friendliness of the staff from Day One is what makes the Horniks feel like Summit Woods is home. "The staff immediately knew our names and called us by Lou Ann and Wayne. That outgoingness carries over to the way residents feel."

Pearl Stearns, 94, has lived at Summit Woods for ten years. She is a lifelong Waukesha resident but keeping up with house maintenance became tough. "I had my sons help me but I didn't want them to do it anymore. They had their own families to care for. And I realized that there was a time that you've got to call it quits."

Pearl has a corner apartment in independent living with a fireplace, two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a patio that overlooks a wooded area. From the beginning, Pearl says she felt like Summit Woods was "home." "I never felt like I was in an apartment," she says. "It never felt like the apartment building feeling some senior facilities have."

Summit Woods offers 104 one- and two-bedroom apartments with five different layout styles. Medicare is accepted. Activities are included for all, such as monthly Happy Hours, holiday celebrations and birthday celebrations. There is a family room, a library and a chapel for church services or private reflection. Heated, underground parking is also provided for residents who drive.

Joyce, and her dog, Mr. Beasley, are pleased they made the move to Summit Woods. "We just love it here. Summit Woods is the most welcoming, warm place. As soon as I walked in the door, I felt like we were home."





Expert Story: Nutrition and Older Adults

By Michael Glasgow, RDN, CD
Nutrition and Transportation Services Supervisor,
ADRC Waukesha County

Nutritional needs change as we age. Gastrointestinal motility decreases (the gut slows down), some vitamins and minerals are not as easily absorbed, and chronic conditions and medication use can impact taste, digestion, absorption and hunger and thirst cues. Bodies are different, so before making dietary changes, speak with your physician or other health care providers.

As we age, it's normal to not have the same ravenous appetite we may have had before, but we have to get enough calories (the body's fuel) in our diet. If we do not get enough calories, our body will use our dietary protein for calories or break down our muscles and use that protein for calories.

The importance of proper protein intake for seniors cannot be overstated. Many health professionals believe that protein needs are slightly increased for seniors to avoid muscle wasting and to maintain strength and balance. Protein is also required for hormone production and regulation, enzyme production, immunity and transporting essential nutrients.

It is extremely important to eat protein from a wide variety of sources in order to get all of the necessary amino acids in our diet – meat, fish and poultry, seeds, beans and legumes, dairy, and whole grains. A healthy senior needs about three, 3-4oz servings of high-value protein (meat, tofu, etc.) each day, and a couple ounces with a daily snack.

Everyone needs fiber. Fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains help keep everything moving. Pay close attention to the fiber content on the nutrition facts label. Healthy older women need about 20-25 grams of dietary fiber, and older men need 35-40 grams each day. If you are increasing your fiber intake, be sure to increase your water intake too!

Vitamin B-12 absorption decreases with age, and deficiency can go undetected for years. It can eventually cause low blood iron, irreversible nerve damage, dementia, and brain atrophy. Deficiency can result in anemia, memory loss and other cognitive deficits. Vitamin B-12 is found only in foods of animal origin like milk, meat, or eggs (especially the yolk).

Vitamin D is required for calcium absorption and acts as a hormone in the body. Supplements are often needed to meet our daily requirement of Vitamin D. Look for Vitamin D3, as D3 is best absorbed. Current daily Vitamin D recommendations for seniors is 600-800 International Units (IUs) per day.

Balance is the key to good health. Eating a variety of foods and getting adequate hydration and physical activity will help us stay healthy as we navigate the Golden Years!

Important Phone Numbers

MILWAUKEE COUNTY:

Transportation, Grocery and Yard Work Service Requests (Milwaukee County): (414) 488-6500

Telephone reassurance for Homebound Older Adults Living in Milwaukee County: Vital Voices: (414) 771-4368

Milwaukee County Transit Plus: (414) 343-1700

Milwaukee County Department on Aging Transportation (Able Access):

- For new riders (to enroll):
Aging Resource Center
(414) 289-6874
- To schedule a ride (once enrolled):
Able Access (414) 536-5800

Aging and Disability Resource Center of Milwaukee County: (414) 289-6874

Milwaukee County Energy Assistance: (414) 270-4653

Hunger Task Force: (414) 777-0483

WAUKESHA COUNTY:

Aging and Disability Resource Center of Waukesha County: (262) 548-7848

Transportation, Grocery and Yard Work Service Requests (Waukesha County): (262) 549-3348

BOTH COUNTIES:

IMPACT 211: 2-1-1

Wisconsin Elder Abuse Hotline: 1 (833) 586-0107

National Elder Fraud Hotline: 833-FRAUD-11 or (833) 372-8311



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Staying Safe: Information about Face Coverings



Image courtesy of CDC.gov

Wearing a face covering can help us protect each other from viruses and germs that cause COVID-19, seasonal influenza and other diseases ... and they don't have to be fancy to be effective. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings such as grocery stores or pharmacies and to be sure to routinely wash them in a washing machine.

According to the CDC, face coverings should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face; secured with ties or ear loops; include more than one layer of fabric; allow you to breathe easily; and be washable. Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose or mouth when removing their face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.

Eras Senior Network has disposable face coverings and washable face coverings available. Please contact our office at (414) 488-6500 or (262) 549-3348 to request face coverings. We will mail them to you.

What are Senior Stockboxes and Who Can Receive Them?

A Senior Stockbox is a free box of healthy food for people age 60+ who meet an annual income threshold. Stockboxes are provided once a month to low-income older adults as part of the federal Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The Stockbox program ensures that qualified adults 60+ have access to nutritious and shelf-stable food.

Hunger Task Force delivers Stockboxes each month to local senior centers and subsidized housing sites for pickup by recipients.

However, if a senior is unable to pickup a Stockbox, an Eras Senior Network volunteer can pick up your box and deliver it to you. To receive a Stockbox, the following income guidelines must be met:

- Have a household income per month (before tax deductions) that is less than or equal to Stockbox income guidelines
 - Income for 1 person in a household is \$1,383
 - Income for 2 people in a household is \$1,868
 - For each additional person in the household, add \$486

If you would like to register to receive a Stockbox each month or would like more information, please call:

- Milwaukee County residents: (414) 777-0483 (Rick)
- Waukesha County residents: (262) 522-2375 (Mari) or (414) 777-0483 (Rick)

If you need assistance with picking up your Stockbox, please call Eras Senior Network to register for the delivery service.