

Connections

A Newsletter for the Members of Community Care



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PERFECT TIME TO DO
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5 Questions For...

Holly Onsager, *Community Care's Director of Behavioral Health*



1 Could you describe your role as Community Care's Director of Behavioral Health?

I manage behavioral health services for all our programs – Family Care, Partnership, and PACE. I supervise 13 behavioral health specialists who assist our care teams. I work closely with our mental health nurse practitioner and our consulting psychiatrist. I also provide behavioral health consultation, psychotherapy, and lead our dementia care program at Community Care.

2 How do you define “behavioral health”?

We focus on prevention, recovery, and providing positive supports to our members. Behavioral health means we put our members at the center of the care we provide, we preserve their rights, and use the best behavioral health practices and care.

3 What are some of the things Community Care staff do to support our members' behavioral health and well-being?

Care teams use a positive, motivational approach to help manage members' care. This means being culturally sensitive and understanding any trauma a member may have experienced. This type of care helps members to achieve their goals with the best health outcomes. Members can get care for behavioral health issues and substance use disorders; psychotherapy and counseling; education; and support.

4 What are Dementia Champions and how does their work contribute to our members' care and quality of life?

We use a method called Dementia Capable Care, which helps care teams develop sup-

ports and interventions based on a member's life story. We work with the skills and abilities they have. Dementia Champions are staff members who support our care teams. As experts, they teach and model best practices. They identify stresses in the home and how to address them. They help care teams address issues like pain, sleeping problems, and other medical or behavioral health issues. Dementia Champions help to make sure that people living with dementia, and their families, know their rights.

5 What are some of Community Care's goals for training staff to work with members who are living with dementia?

We want to be sure that a primary care provider performs a clinical evaluation; that we address a members' ability to make decisions; review their advance directives; and ensure they are safe in their home environment. Care teams look at what assistance a member may need; whether a caregiver needs some training; or what a caregiver's burden may be. Members living with dementia will have a plan that includes supports and interventions that are specific to that person.



2020

A Year of Lessons

*Words from Kenneth Munson,
CEO of Community Care*

Reflecting on the challenges of 2020 remind us to focus on the things that are most important in our lives. We are all sustained by our relationships, whether with family, friends, coworkers or the people we are privileged to serve and support.

The way we connect may have changed in the last year – less in person and more by telephone, text or video, but we are fully committed to our relationship with you and your families. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we continue to work hard to provide the care you expect and deserve.

Conditions are slowly moving toward a new normal where we can resume our regular face-to-face interactions, but there is still a long way to go. As we approach the holiday season, the new year is in sight. I wish you health and happiness for the rest of this year and better times for all in 2021.

Take care of yourselves.

Kenneth Munson
Chief Executive Officer

Do Not Fall for Scam Calls

There are scammers who want you to send them your money. Police warn of an increase in one scam. Callers pretend to be government agents and threaten to arrest you if you do not send them money.

They will pretend to be an officer from the Social Security Adminis-

tration or the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Callers can trick your caller ID by making their phone numbers look like real government phone numbers. The caller will say you need to pay a “fine.”

Government officials never contact people by phone to demand money. Government officials never request personal or sensitive information over the phone.

The calls can be believable. Do not

be fooled.

If you get a call like this, hang up. Then call your local police or the DEA at (877) 792-2873. Otherwise, tell your care manager.

**You can also call
the Community
Care Compliance
Hotline at
(800) 826-6762.**



PACE Program at 30

Family Taking Care of Family

Cindy Cowie remembers how it all started. There was a small team of caregivers, a handful of seniors, and a conference room. The early days of Community Care's PACE program felt like a one-room schoolhouse.

There was a nurse, a social worker, and Cindy, a recreational therapist. Back then, job titles did not matter as much. You just rolled up your sleeves and helped where you were needed.

"Back then we were a family taking care of family, that was really how we all felt," Cindy said. "Everyone was

willing to help anyone out. I still think that's the Community Care way."

The early days of Community Care's PACE Program felt like a one-room schoolhouse.

Fast-forward 30 years and Community Care's PACE program has grown and now serves more than 500 members in three counties. The Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) is designed to provide the kind of care a person would get in a nursing home setting but allows them to stay in their own homes.

In November, Community Care celebrates 30 years

of providing PACE in the Milwaukee area.

Community Care was one of the first organizations in the country to offer the program. It was modeled on a program that started in San Francisco in the early 1980s. The program started here in Milwaukee in 1990. Community Care now offers PACE in Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha counties.

Besides providing care to members in their homes, Community Care also operates two PACE adult day centers, in Milwaukee and Waukesha. While the day centers are open to the public, PACE members who visit the centers can see their doctor, visit the pharmacy, and participate in activities all under one roof.

"It continues to be a unique way of taking care of our members and has done some awesome things for people in the 30 years that we've offered it," Cindy said. "It's made a difference in a lot of peoples' lives."



it's time to talk
about...

Advance Directives

Pamela Evers was no stranger to planning for the end of life. She had already paid for her burial plot and funeral service. She had even started working on a will. Then in June of 2018, she got the news that would change her life, she was diagnosed with COPD and severe emphysema.

“That’s when I realized I needed to do something, because I had so much to do and very little time,” Pamela said. “Even now, I don’t fear death, but at the same time I like having answers to the questions I may have.”

Some of those questions may be: do I want my life prolonged; do I want to be put on a ventilator; do I want to be resuscitated.

By completing an advance directive, Pamela, 62, was able to provide the answers that

would ensure she lived out her life on her terms. It is part of what is called advanced care planning, or end of life planning, and it is one aspect of aging that many people choose to avoid.

As a member of Community Care’s Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), Pamela received guidance on completing the necessary forms to guarantee that her wishes are granted when the time comes. While there are a few types of advance directives, the most important is the power of attorney for health care.

This is a legal document that allows a person to choose someone to carry out their wishes if they are unable to do so themselves. Many families assume they can make decisions for a family member. Wisconsin

does not allow this. The only way to authorize someone to make decisions on your behalf is to have a power of attorney for health care.

As a charter member of Honoring Choices Wisconsin, an initiative of the Wisconsin Medical Society, Community Care works to make advance care planning a routine part of the aging process. Community Care employees are trained to work with members on advance care planning as soon as they enroll.

“The whole goal is to make sure our members still have their voice even if they’re no longer able to say what their wishes are,” said Christine Peterson Watts, Community Care’s palliative care ethics manager. “It’s the only way to honor a person’s wishes and have their voice throughout their life.”

For Pamela, who was born and raised in Milwaukee, having an advance directive provides peace of mind for her and her family. It lays out clearly what she wants done and what she does not want done at the end of her life. After her experience, she has a message for anyone who might be on the fence about completing an advance directive.

“You don’t know when your number is up, only God knows,” Pamela said. “Don’t wait until it’s too late.”

GET YOUR SHOT

A flu vaccine is more important than ever



Flu season is right around the corner in Wisconsin. It is always important to get an annual flu vaccine; it is critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is one of the most important steps you can take to protect yourself, the people you love, and people around you.

The flu is preventable.

“Both influenza and COVID-19 are respiratory illnesses, but until we have a vaccine against COVID-19, the way to help prevent these two viruses from circulating at the same time is to get your flu vaccine now,” said Andrea Palm, department of health services secretary.

Last flu season more than half of Wisconsin residents did not get a flu vaccine. This put many people at a higher risk of getting the flu. More than 180 people died from the flu during the last flu season.

If you did not get a flu vaccine yet, Wisconsin health officials suggest you get one as soon as possible.

Community Care Partnership members can get a flu shot from their primary care physician. You may also get a flu shot at a network pharmacy, like Walgreens or Target, by using your Community Care card for payment. Community Care PACE members can get a flu shot at the Commu-

nity Care Clinic. You should check with your care manager if you have any questions.

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, there are a number of steps you can take to reduce your chances of getting sick from the flu, such as avoiding close contact with people who are sick, washing your hands often, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Why should I get the flu vaccine?

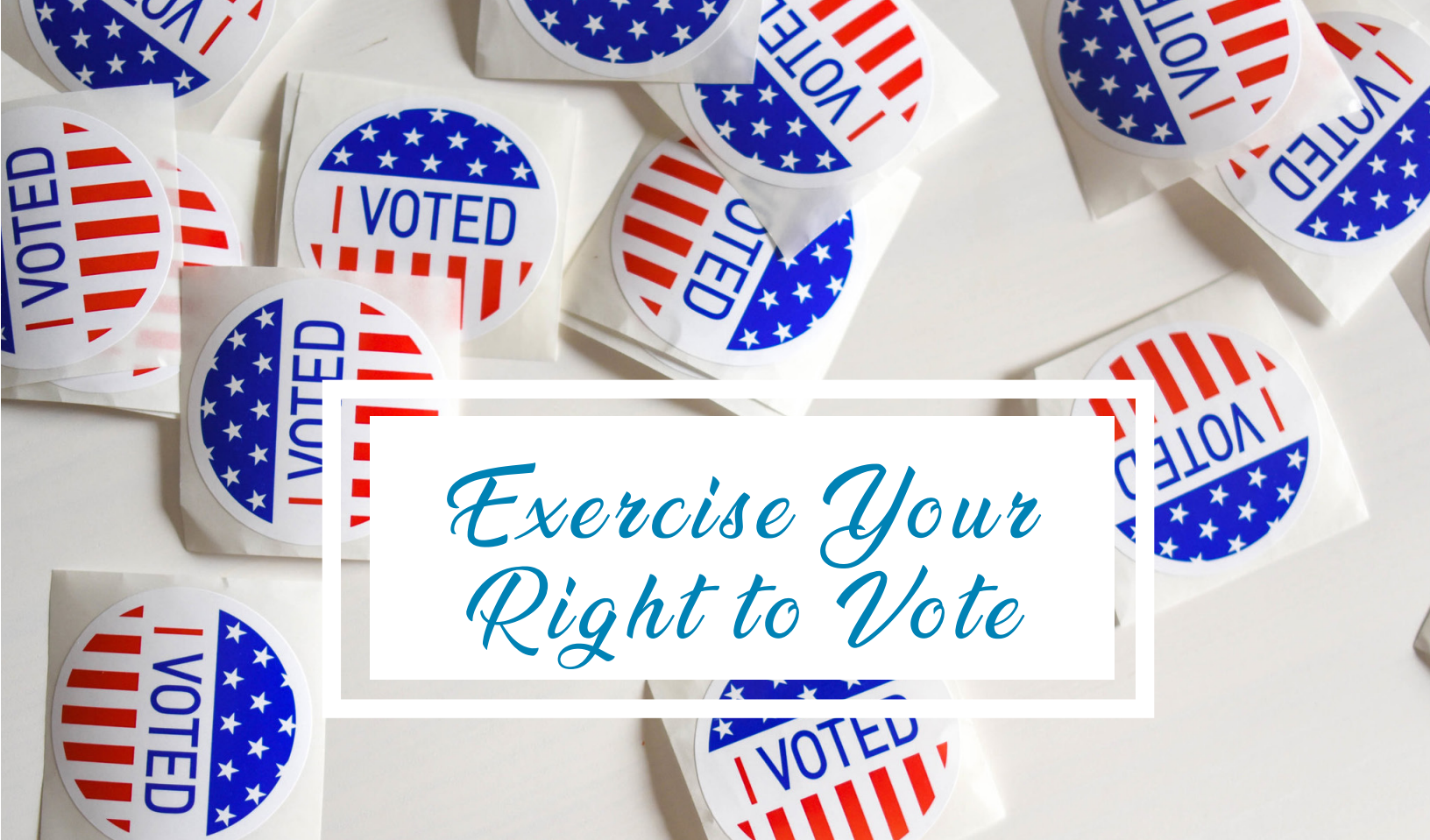
The flu is a serious illness that can make you extremely sick. It can lead to hospitalization, or even to death. The best way to protect yourself and others from the flu is to get the flu vaccine every year in the fall.

Who is at higher risk of having serious complications due to the flu?

It is very important for people 65 and older and people with chronic health conditions, such as asthma or heart disease, to get vaccinated every year to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.

When is the best time to get the flu vaccine?

Get the flu vaccine before flu begins spreading in your community. You should get a flu vaccine by the end of October. However, getting vaccinated throughout the flu season can still be helpful, even into January or later.



Exercise Your Right to Vote

April Woods is used to talking with members about their health and well-being. As a care manager in Racine, she was familiar with the important topics that come up during regular check-ins.

But this year, members started talking to April about voting. Disability rights advocates in Wisconsin have been raising awareness about the barriers that can often keep individuals with disabilities from voting. Many of these same barriers can keep seniors from voting.

This summer, April participated in a voter rights training sponsored by the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition. She figured it was an opportunity

to learn some valuable information that she could share with her members. In talking with members, she learned just how important voting is to them.

“It’s a member’s rights issue, that’s one of the reasons why it’s so important,” April said. “Upholding member rights and making sure that they know what their rights are, is one of the most important things that we do as case managers.”

Know Your Voter Rights

- You have the right to vote privately and independently
- You have the right to an accessible polling place

- You have the right to use an accessible voting machine
- You have the right to assistance marking your ballot
- You have the right to ask for reasonable accommodations
- You have the right to request curbside voting

For more information:
Disability Vote Coalition:
<https://disabilityvote.org/>

Disability Rights WI Voter Hotline phone number:
1-844-347-8683



Falls ARE NOT A Fact of Life

You might say a fall got Kelly Schroeder interested in working with seniors. Schroeder, Community Care's director of clinical services, watched her grandmother struggle after a fall. As a result, her grandmother found herself dependent on others for the rest of her life

As we get older, we lose some of our abilities. We slow down. Our eyesight gets a little worse. We may not hear as well as we used to. Many of these changes are just part of aging.

It may be tough to accept these changes, but we often learn to live with them. What we may not accept is the great risk that comes with these changes: falling.

While declines in strength, or eyesight, or hearing may be a normal

part of aging, falling is not.

"A fall could be the difference between living at home independently and not living at home and depending on other people," Schroeder said. "The thing about falls, there are so many factors that contribute to it, there's so much we can do, it's not a given that you're going to get old and fall."

After age 65, falling becomes a public health concern. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in

four Americans 65 and older falls every year, and one out of five falls causes a serious injury, such as a head trauma, or a fracture. Falls cost the U.S. healthcare system an estimated \$50 billion annually. But it does not have to be this way.

Every year, Community Care dedicates the month of September to raising awareness about the seriousness of falling, especially for seniors, and how it impacts their quality of life.

Community Care helps its

members live independently within the community. One of the keys to living independently is protecting yourself by reducing the risk of falling. That is why staff are trained to work with members to help them avoid falling.

There is a lot that goes into helping seniors avoid falls: balance, exercise, diet, medications, and underlying health issues. Assessing your risk for falls is an important first step, according to Kevin Konieczka, Community Care's rehab therapy supervisor.

It may be tough to admit that you have fallen or to accept the fact that you could fall in the future, because of your sense of pride, your concerns about privacy, or the fear that you might not be able to stay in your home. Falling, or the fear of falling, can dramatically reduce your quality of life.

The mental and emotional component is important. It is also important to talk honestly about falling with your loved ones or caregivers. Discussing the seriousness of falls with a loved one can be tricky, but it is a necessary part of caring for a loved one who is aging.

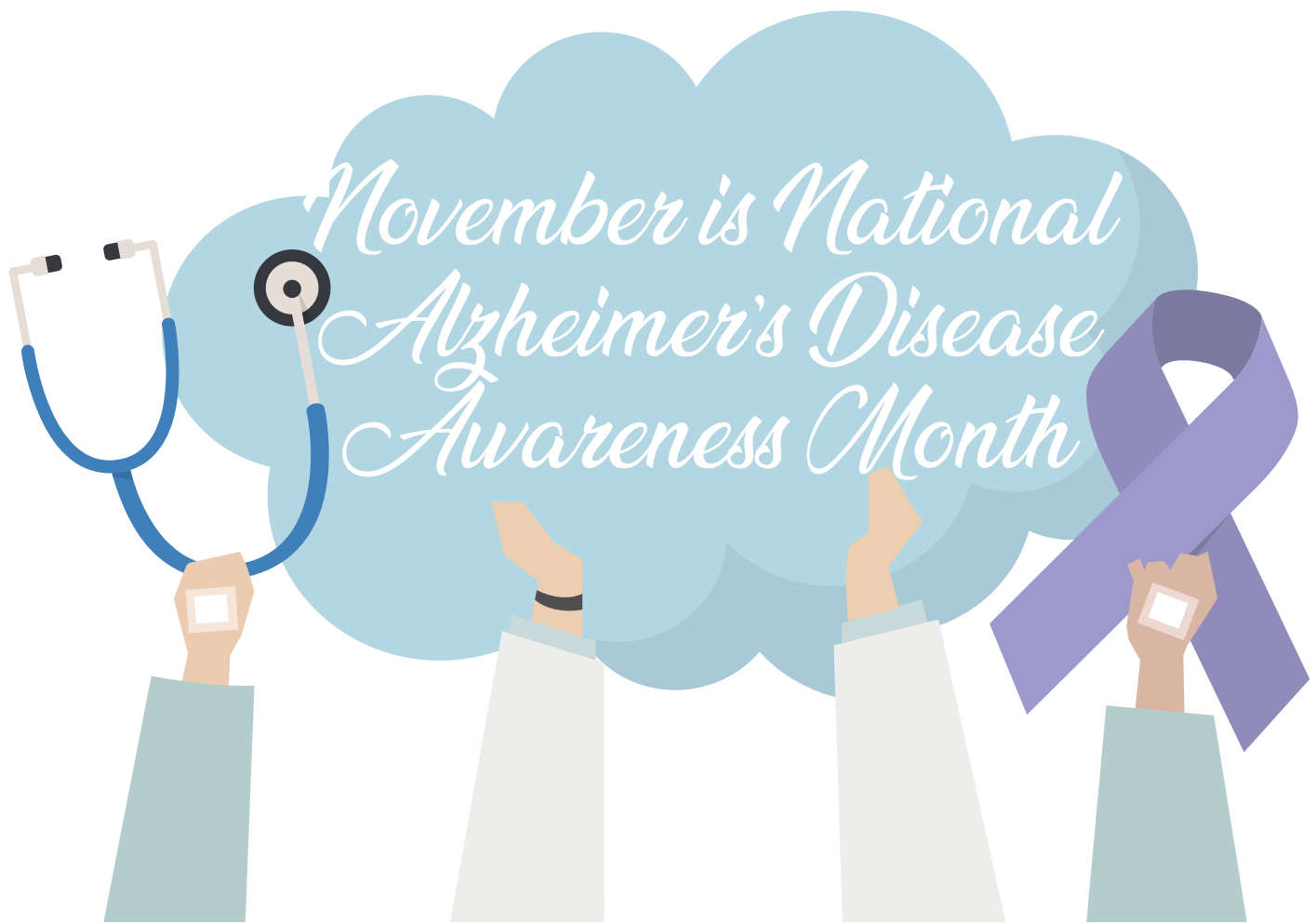
"If we can be proactive in our approach, people certainly have fewer falls and have a better mindset," Konieczka said.

Take the Right Steps to Prevent Falls

If you take care of your overall health, you may be able to lower your chances of falling. Most of the time, falls and accidents do not "just happen." Here are a few tips to help you avoid falls and broken bones:

- 1 Stay physically active.** Plan an exercise program that is right for you. Regular exercise improves muscles and makes you stronger. It also helps keep your joints, tendons, and ligaments flexible.
- 2 Have your eyes and hearing tested.** Even small changes in sight and hearing may cause you to fall. Always wear your glasses or contacts when you need them. If you have a hearing aid, be sure it fits well and wear it.
- 3 Find out about the side effects of any medicine you take.** If a drug makes you sleepy or dizzy, tell your doctor or pharmacist.
- 4 Get enough sleep.** If you are sleepy, you are more likely to fall.
- 5 Stand up slowly.** Getting up too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop. That can make you feel wobbly. Get your blood pressure checked when lying and standing.
- 6 Be careful when walking on wet or icy surfaces.** They can be very slippery! Try to have sand or salt spread on icy areas by your front or back door.

Always tell your doctor if you have fallen since your last checkup, even if you are not hurt when you fall. A fall can alert your doctor to a new medical problem or problems with your medications or eyesight that can be corrected. Your doctor may suggest physical therapy, a walking aid, or other steps to help prevent future falls.



Dementia is a general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia among older adults.

November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, a chance to raise awareness about this disease, which affects more than 5 million Americans. While dementia is more common as people grow older, it is not a normal part of aging.

Being physically active, eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and spending time with family and friends offer proven benefits. They may also help slow the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Here are some tips for living well with dementia.

Exercise. You do not have to join a gym or spend a lot of money. Even light housework, gardening,

and walking around the neighborhood can have benefits. Experts recommend both aerobic exercise (such as walking) and strength training (such as lifting weights).

Eat right. A healthy diet is proven to influence heart health, which relates to brain health.

Sleep well. Lack of sleep and poor-quality sleep are linked to memory problems. Try to get 7 to 8 hours per night.

Be mindful. One way to help manage stress and reduce anxiety and depression is a technique called mindfulness. Mindfulness is being aware of what is happening in the present, both inside and outside of your body.

Stay social. People with dementia who live alone do not manage daily activities as well when they feel lonely. Join a support group, chat with someone regularly, or volunteer at a local school or community organization. For example, you could read to children at the library.

SEASONAL CRAFTING

The holidays are a perfect time to do crafts. Here are two crafts you can do by yourself or with a friend or a loved one. You can decorate your home or make them as gifts.

Autumn paper plate wreaths

This is a great craft for Thanksgiving. Hang it on your door or inside your home for a lovely seasonal decoration.

What you need:

- A paper plate
- Leaves
- Scissors
- Liquid glue

Directions:

- 1) Take a fall walk and collect colorful fallen leaves.
- 2) When you get home, cut out the center of a paper plate to make a wreath shape.
- 3) Glue the leaves you collected one by one to the paper plate, overlapping them slightly. Let dry.



Simple sock snowman

This snowman is a great craft for decorating your home during the holidays or it makes a perfect gift.

What you need:

- A long white sock
- 1 large funnel
- 2-3 cups rice or other grain
- 2 medium rubber bands
- One colored sock (for the hat)
- A black permanent marker
- 4 buttons
- One small piece of ribbon
- Glue gun

Directions:

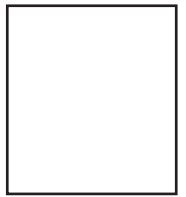
- 1) Using the funnel, fill the sock with rice or grain of choice, and use rubber band to close the top.
- 2) Use the second elastic to form the head, placing it closer to the top of the sock. Wrap it around a few times if need be and squish around the rice to get a nice snowman shape.
- 3) To make the hat, roll up the colored sock a bit and place it over the top of the white sock, stuffing any excess material from the body inside the hat.
- 4) Next, draw eyes and a mouth with the black marker.
- 5) Using the glue gun, fasten the buttons down the front of the snowman's body and place one in the center of the face for the iconic button nose!
- 6) Finally, wrap the ribbon around the snowman's neck like a scarf and glue in place.



Source: Institute on Aging



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