

# FTAAAD QUARTERLY NEWS



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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

We all know that people want to remain in their homes as they age. But the homes that they've lived safely in for years may become dangerous as they get older and begin to deal with less mobility, balance issues, sensory issues and slower overall reflexes.

But there are many basic and relatively-inexpensive home-modification options that can reduce the risks of falling; make interior spaces safe for walkers, canes or wheelchairs; and increase the overall usability of the home

ACL.gov has released a very helpful PDF called "Modifying Your Home for Healthy Aging" (<https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Resources/BROCHURES/Index.aspx>). It includes a number of suggestions that can increase safety and independence, as well as make life easier on caregivers, like installing handheld

shower heads and/or shower seats, removing or securing rugs to the floor, and adding high-contrast non-skid tape to stairs.

But it also includes information on how to determine the right modifications for you, tips for finding and working with a home-modification provider, questions to ask during a home assessment, ways to pay for home modifications, and suggestions for adapting to them once they are complete.

For anyone working with the older population, caring for aging parents or other family members, or just getting older themselves, this is a great resource that can make aging in place safer for everyone accessing the home.



**Angie Gwaltney,**  
Director

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## Save The Date!

### FTAAAD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON AGING

April 29, 2025  
Kingsport, TN

## KEY DATES

**NET-VAC Meeting**  
No Meeting in July

**NET-VAC Meeting**  
August Meeting Cancelled

**NET-VAC Meeting**  
September 4, 9:30 am  
Trinity Assembly of God,  
617 University Pkwy., Johnson City





## ROBY ADULT CENTER HOSTS TN KIDS EVENT

The Roby Fitzgerald Adult Center hosted First Lady Maria Lee and local elementary students to participate in the East TN Kickoff for the statewide Tennessee Kids Serve Summer Challenge.

The goal of this challenge is to instill in kids a heart for service and ask them

to devote a small portion of their summer break to serving others.

Local students and their parents joined members of the Roby Center for craft activities and lunch to celebrate the kickoff of this service project challenge in Northeast Tennessee.



## CHANGES TO SSI RULES

The Social Security Administration (SSA) recently finalized three Supplemental Security Income (SSI) rules that will reduce barriers and expand access to SSI. These rules impact in-kind support and maintenance (ISM) determinations, in which an individual's SSI benefit can be reduced by up to one-third if SSA determines that they are getting in-kind help with food or shelter from others. These changes will help older adults and individuals with disabilities who live in low-income households to qualify for SSI and receive the full SSI benefit, reduce reporting burdens, and ensure that food received from friends and family is not counted as income that reduces an individual's SSI benefit. These rules go into effect on September 30, 2024.

These changes expand the definition of "public assistance households" and add SNAP as a public assistance benefit and omitting food altogether from in-kind support calculations. They are also expanding the rental subsidy rule to apply an In-Kind Support and Maintenance (ISM) rental subsidy exception. This rule provides that a "business arrangement" exists, such that the SSI applicant or recipient is not considered to be receiving ISM in the form of room or rent, when the amount of monthly required rent for the property equals or exceeds the presumed maximum value.

All of these rule changes will make it easier to reduce barriers and expand access to the SSI program. For more information, go to [ssa.gov/regulations/recentregulatory.html](https://ssa.gov/regulations/recentregulatory.html)

—Courtesy of Justice in Aging



## MYRIDE KINGSPORT & JOHNSON CITY GRANT

MyRide Kingsport and MyRide Johnson City have received a grant from a local organization to pay for two full-time coordinators, plus software licenses and other related expenses for a year.

These volunteer-transportation programs provide door-through-door service to subscribers, with up to three stops on trips for \$6 per ride, plus an annual \$25 subscription fee. Volunteers use their own cars to transport their riders, and can accompany them into their medical offices, grocery stores, etc. instead of having to wait for the driver

to come back and pick them up.

Both coordinators will temporarily work from the FTAAAD offices in Johnson City, but the plan is to have community organizations in each city take over the management of the programs by the end of the fiscal year.

For more information about the MyRide programs, call 423-483-5309. Or check out the MyRide Kingsport and Johnson City Facebook pages.

—Courtesy of Lee Gay, FTAAAD





## JOHNSON CO. SENIOR CENTER HOLDS JUNE AWARENESS EVENTS

During the month of June, the Johnson County Senior Center highlighted Elder Abuse Awareness Month, educating its members about this often devastating and underreported crime.

According to the Department of Justice (DOJ), only one in 24 elder abuse cases are reported to the police, and 90 percent of those cases occur in the victim’s home. The DOJ estimated that two-thirds of the perpetrators are the victim’s own family members. The six types of elder abuse include physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or abandonment by caregivers, financial exploitation, and healthcare fraud. The fastest growing category is financial exploitation—the unauthorized use of the victim’s funds and assets.

Due to the rise in elder abuse cases around the globe, in 2006 the International Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse designated June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Since June 15 fell on a Saturday this year, the senior center held its Elder Abuse Awareness Day on Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. Beginning at 11am, guest speaker Nancy Wills, a local retired social worker who served in both the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Adult Protective Services (APS), spoke about senior scams, how to identify elder abuse, and situations she handled while working with APS.

In addition to Wills’ presentation, the center

also held a special Bingo game which was sponsored by Paul Brian with AirMed. Attendees were asked to wear purple in honor of Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

—Courtesy of Kathy Motsinger-Eller, Johnson County Senior Center



## FOR HEALTHY AGING, PUT DOWN THE REMOTE CONTROL

New findings, the latest to emerge from the long-running Nurses’ Health Study, show that even light physical activity, including housework, increases one’s odds of healthy aging, defined as reaching 70 free of mental health issues, memory issues, physical impairments, and chronic disease.

The research team, made up of investigators from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, and institutions in China and Austria, studied 45,176 people over 20 years, using TV watching as a proxy for sedentary behavior. They found that every increase of two hours of daily TV cut the chance of healthy aging by 12 percent. By contrast, two hours of light physical activity led to a six percent increase.

It’s well-established that physical

activity reduces the likelihood of early death and that vigorous exercise boosts the odds of healthy aging. Researchers behind the new study wanted to explore the impact of light physical activity.

The team cited several potential mechanisms for TV’s negative effects. Prolonged sitting, they say, causes cellular and molecular responses that impair skeletal muscle function and mitochondrial activity. Skeletal muscles, in turn, play important roles in glucose metabolism, while excess sitting has been shown to reduce insulin sensitivity, disrupt sugar and fat metabolism after meals, increase inflammation, and affect blood flow to the brain.

The work is particularly important today, the team says, because

technology has changed the nature of both work and leisure for many Americans. People are less active than previous generations throughout the lifespan and tend to move even less as they age.

The research also confirms earlier findings indicating that watching TV is particularly damaging to health. The research showed that even substituting other sedentary behaviors like a sedentary job, or driving, or a home-based sedentary activity like reading improved the odds of aging healthfully over TV watching. Even substituting sleep, for those who get seven hours or less per night, increased the odds of healthy aging.

—Courtesy of The Harvard Gazette





## FTAAAD

### First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability

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No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

This project is funded under a grant contract with the State of Tennessee.

Contributions are encouraged to support all programs but no one is refused service for inability to pay.

The FTAAAD is part of the First Tennessee Development District.



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**SHIP**  
State Health Insurance Assistance Program

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## PHOTO GALLERY



*Governor Lee and new DDA Commissioner Brad Turner commemorate the merging of TCAD and DIDD into the new Department of Disability and Aging (DDA)*



*Maggie Holmes of FTAAAD's Public Guardian program is interviewed by DDA staff for a promotional video about their use of robotic pets for some of the clients*



*FTAAAD's Karrie Erick and other LTC Ombudsmen from across the state participated in their annual training this spring.*