2020 SEMAAA Annual Report

Helping Older adults and their families age successfully

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Highlights Inside:
⇒  SEMAAA COVID-19 Response
⇒  Nutrition Programs
⇒  Consumers Served
⇒  Programs for Older Adults
2020 Annual Report Message

When thinking about the year in review for 2020, it sure was speckled with loads of uncertainty and many things felt upside-down. I would like to focus on the response to the events of 2020 from a “Silver Linings” (SL) perspective. Honestly, we learned a lot about the resiliency of older adults, how to frame new opportunities, and that learning new things as we get older - may take more time, but the results are worth it.

SL #1 – Doing things Differently & Still Achieving Success: If we told individuals prior to the pandemic that they would be participating in an evidence based health class using a tablet and a virtual platform, they may have laughed out loud. SEMAAA successfully assisted five providers to host virtual Aging Mastery classes using a “Book Club” format to improve the lives of older adults in our region.

One agency tells the story of how a gentleman in his early 80’s, learned how to search the Internet, using “Hey Google” to look up information on books, music and celebrities. He even joined a virtual Memory Café to help combat isolation and he continues to use the tablet as a tool to help him stay engaged.

SL #2 – Pivoting to Curbside Pick-up & Home Delivered Meals: Although our nutrition providers have not returned to congregate dining, creativity and persistence resulted in older adults in our region receiving nutritious meals. Some individuals have received two meals a day and overall meal distribution was up from last year. Please see page 6 for full details.

The generosity of community members has been unprecedented. Individuals and organizations have donated both time and funding to reach those that may have otherwise not received a delicious meal & a friendly smile.

SL #3 – Increasing Collaboration with Community Providers: A variety of State, Federal and private foundation funding made it possible to form partnerships with providers as they adjusted programming and services to meet the needs of older adults in our region. Some of the impact areas include: Improved access to technology equipment & services; fresh food and grocery delivery; expanded homemaker and chore services; mental health support through 1:1 and group sessions; fall prevention initiatives; increased access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and support to mobile outreach resources to homeless individuals.

I am completely in awe of area providers for finding different ways to deliver services during a pandemic and creating new models for the future. My sincere appreciation goes out to SEMAAA staff & board for embracing resiliency in a time of uncertainty. Thank you for taking the time to read about some of SEMAAA’s 2020 bright spots!

Finding Ways to Engage at Every Age,

Laurie Brownell
SEMAAA Executive Director

Pictured Above: SEMAAA Board Meeting
2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Support and Revenue

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<th>Source</th>
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Expenses

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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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Revenue over Expenses

- **$ 43,619**

*unaudited totals
SEMAAA’s COVID-19 Response

Keeping older adults safe has been at the forefront of our efforts and that has included continued support to our provider agencies throughout Southeastern Minnesota. In the beginning (March of 2020), we started to digest how the issuance of President Trump’s National Emergency and Governor Walz’s declaration of a state-wide Peacetime Emergency impacted the delivery of SEMAAA services and those offered by our partner organizations.

SEMAAA implemented a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan to help ensure the safety and well-being of staff. The majority of SEMAAA staff transitioned to working from home and we quickly became familiar with concepts such as: virtual platforms, physical distancing; mask mandates; and sanitization stations.

The pandemic brought with it, Federal, State and private foundation funding that SEMAAA awarded to community-based agencies throughout our region to help keep older adults safe and well.

CARES

The Administration of Community Living (Federal) and the Minnesota Board on Aging (State) worked together to roll out funding initiatives such as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This funding supported caregiver services, home and community-based services and nutrition. We also benefited from other State funds including COVID-19 Relief Funds for Enhanced Home Care and Senior Nutrition.

Agencies Receiving Funding:

**SEMCAC** - Nutrition
**Three Rivers Community Action** - Nutrition
**La Crescent Dining** - Nutrition
**125 Live** – Grocery shopping/meals
**Elder Network** – Technology, Program to Encourage Active & Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS)
**Winona Friendship Center** – Technology, PEARLS
**Senior Resources of Freeborn County** - Technology
**Family Service Rochester** – Fresh food, technology, enhanced home care, counseling/PEARLS
**Neighbors in Action of Houston County** - Technology
**Prairie Island Tribal Community** – Fresh food and technology
**Winona State University/WellConnect** - PEARLS

*Pictured: FSR COVID-19 Supplies*
COVID Response continued:

**Minnesota Council on Foundations**
SEMAAA was fortunate to receive $100,000 grant from the Minnesota Council of Foundations MN Disaster Recovery Fund in association with the St. Paul & MN Foundation. Grant funds were used to support community nonprofits serving older adults and individuals with disabilities. SEMAAA awarded funds to sixteen organizations in our region.

**Agencies Receiving Funding:**

- **Apple Tree Dental** – Tele-dentistry and mobile dental procedures
- **ARC Minnesota** — Micro-grant stipend program for technology
- **Pine Haven Foundation** – Cambro food-warming unit
- **Catholic Charities of Southern MN** – Active Aging/Independent for Life classes
- **Winona Friendship Center** — Technology access program
- **Family Service Rochester** - Fresh food delivery and technology support
- **Mower County Seniors** — Food delivery to seniors in rural areas
- **Home and Community Options** – Winona Co.— IPADS for individuals with disabilities for remote mental health appointments and virtual classes
- **Faith in Action of Dodge County** – Paid housekeeping and volunteer support
- **Fifty North** — Technology access program
- **Van Horn Public Library** – Exterior book return for older adults
- **ExercisAbilities** – Evidence based program for Fall Prevention Clinic
- **WellConnect** – Technology access program
- **The Landing, Inc.** – Mobile outreach for homeless individuals
- **Three Rivers Community Action** – Rural transportation program
- **Heritage Court** (Houston MN) – Technology support services to help combat social isolation.

![Pine Island Van Horn Public Library receiving their check for a new book return.](image1)

![The Landing mobile outreach van for homeless individuals.](image2)
Senior Nutrition services in our region had big changes during the 2020 Pandemic. Our provider, SEMCAC, was no longer able to provide congregate dining and converted most of their congregate sites to home delivered or curbside pick up. Beginning in April, our two Nutrition providers, SEMCAC and Three Rivers, were offering curbside pick-up and home-delivered meals in most locations.

Many seniors were also able to receive second meals and shelf stable meals during critical times of the pandemic. Providers were able to shift gears several times, change their service model and even with the close encounters and positive COVID-19 cases, they never had to close a kitchen for more than 1 day and were able to serve clients through everything.

During 2020, SEMAAA began receiving additional funding for Senior Nutrition. These funding sources included Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES), COVID-19 Relief Senior Nutrition Funds in addition to the traditional Older Americans Act Title IIIC funding.

Congregate dining was down 115,065 meals from 2019 to 2020. However, home delivered meals were up 219,230 meals in that same time period. SEMCAC meals were up 211,143 and Three Rivers up 8,087 meals. We also added 317 meals and 40 grocery deliveries through a COVID-19 Relief fund mini grant with 125Live in Olmsted County. That is over 104,482 extra meals in 2020.

SEMCAC was very proud of the fact that they did not layoff or reduce hours of any team members last year and hired a few new staff to help with the new volume of meals that were served in some locations. Three Rivers shared this about a client in Faribault who writes little notes on her donation letters: “The meals are just wonderful!”

“I love the vegetables and hotdishes!” “I am so thankful for this program; it helps me so much.”

SEMCAC success story: An older, disabled vet on our meal program in Winona County, was put in touch with the senior advocates and they were able to help him stay in his home during the pandemic. SEMCAC delivers 14 meals a week to him and were also able to work with the VA to get him a microwave and mini fridge so he could stay on one level of his home during the pandemic.

This year we are extra thankful for the providers and volunteers in our region who were able to quickly pivot and offer senior nutrition in new ways as well as the additional funding that was utilized to cover costs and offer additional home delivered meals!

Pictured: Staff and Volunteers from Mower County Seniors
SEMAAAA Staff Meeting Needs in 2020

**Senior LinkAge Line®**

- SLL staff took a total of 12,553 calls in 2020.
- SLL staff took 3299 calls during open Enrollment between October and December.
- SLL staff recorded “New to Medicare” videos to be shared on our website and social media soon!
- SLL staff taught 3 virtual ABCD’s of Medicare classes.

**Return to Community**

- RTC staff assisted 281 individuals to discharge from a Nursing Home or remain in a community setting.
- RTC staff triaged and assisted with 449 referrals from numerous community partners, caregivers and individuals in the community needing assistance.

**Pre-Admission Screening**

- PAS staff made 5200 contacts and processed approximately 5000 PAS’s.
Age Friendly Communities

Multiple communities in MN are working to achieve “Age Friendly” status as designated by the AARP and World Health Organization (WHO). The aim is to help people live easily and comfortably in their homes and communities as they age. The process is based on the WHO’s 8 domains of livability which are housing, outdoor spaces and building, transportation, communication and information, civic participation and employment, respect and social inclusion, health services and community supports, and social participation. At this time Olmsted County and Northfield are working to become Age Friendly. Northfield has completed the survey, identified priority areas and created community domain teams to work on goals within those areas. Age Friendly Olmsted County has completed the survey and report and will begin prioritizing next steps for an action plan.

Research shows that people of all ages benefit from the adoption of policies and programs that make neighborhoods walkable, feature transportation options, enable access to key services, provide opportunities to participate in community activities, and support housing that is affordable and adaptable.

If you are interested in launching this in your community AARP provides an Age-Friendly toolkit to help leaders assess the needs in their community, evaluate the results, and create an action plan to address each domain. SEMAAA staff can provide technical assistance to get you started and guide you through the process. Contact: Dan Conway at: dan@semaaa.org or Chersten Keillor at: chersten@semaaa.org.

AARP Age Friendly Information

Aging Mastery Program

SEMAAA worked with 5 providers in 2020 who offered an Aging Mastery Book club to a total of 51 older adults. During the summer the Austin YMCA was able to offer an in-person, outside format to their Nordic walking club members. In the fall, Elder Network, Family Service Rochester, Shorewood Senior Campus and the Albert Lea Blue Zone coordinators all led it virtually. This program was developed by the National Council on Aging and focuses on helping older adults take charge of their health, renew healthy habits and make better choices. The book club version of the program uses a book called, The Aging Mastery Playbook and walks you through topics on the six dimensions of aging which are: Gratitude and Mindfulness, Health and Wellbeing, Finances and Future Planning, Connections and Community, Creativity and Learning, and Legacy and Purpose. Go to YourJuniper to see dates for upcoming sessions, or WellConnect’s site.

Pictured: Top Right - Albert Lea AMP, Bottom Right - Austin AMP class
Dementia Friendly Opportunities

While the pandemic did impact some of the typical programming options for families it also led to new, creative opportunities that continue to be bright spots in our region. The Remember Project in particular has embraced the virtual world and managed to move what was to be a live theater production with facilitated conversations into a Zoom experience. Both Pine Island and Winona were recipients of a grant to help host these plays. Audience members view the play and other content together then are moved into small breakout rooms for discussion and reconvene with the large group for a final facilitated discussion. This format has worked remarkably well and has allowed other family members and professionals to join from anywhere in the U.S. The first play, “Steering Into the Skid” was viewed by 120 people in October, November and December of 2020. There are three plays in the series and all are designed to help family members, caregivers, local businesses, and the broader community be in a conversation around the subject of dementia as well as the most well-known form of memory loss which is Alzheimer’s Disease. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board to support a 2020-2021 tour in Greater Minnesota. Upcoming event dates!

Other dementia friendly supports for families in our region include Memory Minder Kits from the Wabasha Public Library. They received a SHIP grant in October to purchase contents for the kits which include evidence-based interactive activities to boost brain function and stimulate the mind and memory. There are 4 kit options: Prevention, Early, Middle and Late stage. Call the library for more information or to reserve a kit-651-565-3927.

If you were looking for a musical opportunity in 2020 both the Rochester Resounding Voices Choir (RV) and the Winona Forget Me Notes Chorus continued to meet all year via Zoom and continue to at this time. For more information about RV call 507-218-8376 or email: info@resoundingvoices.org.

If you are looking for resources, programs or service options for yourself or a loved one with dementia call the Senior LinkAge Line® to find out more about options near you. 1-800-333-2433 or email Chersten for a SE MN Dementia Guide: Chersten@semaaa.org.

Pictured: Top right-scene from, “In the Garden”, Bottom left-example of materials in Memory Minders Kits.
Fall Prevention and Exercise Programs Going Strong in 2020

This year was like no other in regard to service delivery and the pandemic required organizations and leaders to quickly learn new technology, or pause on offerings due to fidelity guidelines not allowing programs to be held remotely. Some of the leaders and organizations we support were still able to hold programs via Zoom or Facebook live stream or even in-person over the summer where it was easy to be outside and spread out. Organizations we contract with were still able to engage 260 unduplicated individuals in 2020 primarily in the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP) and the Tai Ji Quan program. Catholic Charities was able to continue offering the AFEP program remotely and safely in-person during the summer. Even if a participant couldn’t participate leaders were calling twice a week to check in to encourage them to keep moving and just have a conversation. Olmsted Medical Center and Ace Brain Fitness were able to offer TJQ via Zoom successfully with solid participation numbers throughout!

SEMAAA received funding from the MN Council on Foundations which we awarded to a few organizations who purchased tablets to allow seniors to participate in evidence-based programs now and into the future. All organizations hope for a better year with a return to in-person programming if possible in 2021 but they are equipped to continue offering programs remotely if needed.

Pictured: Top right– AFEP Plainview outside, AFEP Plainview indoor, Bottom–AFEP Zoom program in Fillmore County.
Comments from SLL and RTC Consumers

I am so glad you called today, you have just made my day!

Thank you very, very much. I appreciate you taking care of us seniors.

All the information you have been able to provide has been very helpful and reassuring to the rest of the family, while making the decision to bring mom back home.

The staff person I talked to really deserves a raise!

I am doing great, but I enjoy our conversations and feel comfortable knowing someone is thinking of me.

I appreciate how patient the staff person was, and he gave me information that made sense. I have talked to several other agencies, and they just confused me.

Wonderful, thank you! You have been delightful!

I appreciate your follow-up and all of your help and your information. Like I said, I’m clueless. Thank God for people like you who are always so helpful! God bless you!

I have called the Senior LinkAge Line® several times, and the staff are able to explain complicated information in a clear manner.
Looking for services or supports for yourself or a loved one? Call the SLL for help or go to either of these websites to research service options.

https://www.minnesotahelp.info/